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Transformative civility as a model for practical theological leadership

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TRANSFORMATIVE CIVILITY AS A MODEL FOR PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP

by

LINWOOD THOMAS BLIZZARD, II

B.S., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2002
M. Div., Howard University, 2011
S.T.M., Boston University, 2017

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Approved by

Project Thesis Advisor _____

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Ph.D.
Professor of Theology and Education

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my devoted wife Joycelyn for her untiring devotion to push me to complete this work. In addition, I dedicate this thesis to my children – Linwood, III, Joelle, and Lincoln – for their flexibility in having daddy write rather than play at times. Furthermore, I dedicate this thesis to my father and mother – Linwood and Regina Blizzard – and to my father-in-law and my mother-in-law – Reginald and Joyce Bassette – for your continued belief and support of our family. We are eternally grateful. Finally, I dedicate this thesis to those who strive to have a voice and cannot find a voice. I pray this thesis becomes a gateway to give a voice to the voiceless.

Linwood T, Blizzard, II

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Linwood T. Blizzard, II

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LINWOOD THOMAS BLIZZARD, II

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Project Thesis Advisor: Mary Elizabeth Moore, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Theology, Professor of Theology and Education, Co-Director of the Center for Practical Theology

ABSTRACT

This project explores the role of Black Baptist churches – both past and present – in educational reform. Transformative civility offers a practical theological leadership model that engages in *phronēsis* and conscientization for liberation. The study focuses on Northumberland County, Virginia, and draws upon Robert London Smith's Black Existential Theological Hermeneutic (BETH) method. The BETH method uncovers practical and theological challenges and demonstrates how transformative civility can promote educational reform. In such reform, *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) and conscientization (critical consciousness) awaken and empower the church and community to take action and provide equal access and justice for all citizens regardless of race.

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List of Abbreviations

ABHMS	American Baptist Home Mission Society
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
BETH	Black Existential and Theological Hermeneutic
EMPOWER	Equipping Minds by Preventing Oppression with Educational Resources
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
NBCUSA	National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.
NCPS	Northumberland County Public Schools
OCR	Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education
PNBC	Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
SOL	Standards of Learning
VDOE	Virginia Department of Education

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This project will address the issue of apathy for justice within and among African-American Baptist congregations in Northumberland County, Virginia. Injustices within the county come in various forms, but a clear, measurable metric is reading scores of children in the schools, which reveal (or partially reveal) student literacy in the county. Disparities in literacy are a problem because of the cascading effect of the academic achievement gap between black and white students in a county in which black and white people together comprise 91% of the student population and 97% of the county population.[1] The disparities between black and white students lead to a difference in economic opportunities, trends in mass incarceration, and ultimately a difference in one's life outlook, both short and long term.[2] This problem has theological implications and implications for ministry in black church traditions, where core religious practices are intended to cultivate a better reality in the current life (existential reality), while still holding to a better-promised afterlife (eschatological hope).

This project will interrogate Walter Fluker's perspective on the "long history of producing ethical leadership" in and through the black church. Walter Fluker notes, "Despite inadequate material and social resources, the black church tradition is a prime

1 "Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2015: District Enrollment," Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/Page?t=d&eid=32536&syk= 8&pid=2278.

2 Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 212.

candidate for offering direction for the development of leaders for our national and transnational communities."[3] Fluker challenges this position in his later work by suggesting, "Prophetic activism … has been anesthetized by the controlling dramas of possessive individualism and religious narcissism."[4] J. Deotis Roberts suggests, "The very nature of the black church involves it in the mission of liberation."[5] This project will assess historical actions by black churches nationally and locally in the area of educational justice – a form of liberation – as well as contemporary responses by black churches to educational disparities in Northumberland County.

Fluker interrogates the intersection of religious leadership and educational justice. He asserts, "The civilizing influences of education…had a paradoxical impact on black leadership in respect to the public practices of recognition, respect, prestige, and loyalty to democratic values that created a dilemma."[6] On the one hand, education can enhance the African-American community's self-identity and sense of greater access to resources. Education can provide an entrance to economic opportunity through a career. On the other hand, education can divide the African-American community's communalism and widen the reality of racial disparity. The entrance to an elevated economic can cause

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[3] Walter Fluker, "Introduction: The Failure of Ethical Leadership," in *The Stone that the Builders Rejected: The Development of Ethical Leadership from the Black Church Tradition*, ed. Walter Fluker (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 13.

[4] Walter Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial* America (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 23.

[5] J. Deotis Roberts, "A Black Ecclesiology of Involvement," in *Black Religion, Black Theology: The Collected Essays of J. Deotis Roberts*, ed. David Emmanuel Goatley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 73.

[6] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 37.

someone to look down upon another who did not go to college: an expansion of classism. The challenge is how do black churches resolve this dilemma?

The parishioners of the Northumberland churches recognize an educational disparity exists, but have neither quantified the problem nor recently attempted to advocate for justice. The black church, in this context, repeats the actions of past generations who sought survival through civility, described by Walter Fluker as "dysfunctional civility."[7] However, this repetitive form of civility leaves parishioners feeling powerless in their ability to advocate for themselves and their community. This project will address the question of how transformative civility can be a form of practical theological leadership in framing how one advocates for one's community around educational justice.

Methodology

The project will utilize Robert London Smith's "Black Existential and Theological Hermeneutic (BETH) method." This method reflects upon the African-American religious community's perspective of their experiences compared to their beliefs in how they should live in, an act of resistance that leads to transformed practices. The BETH method has three stages: a contextual component, a systematic component, and a hermeneutic outcome.[8] True to Smith's method, the project begins with a contextual study of educational disparities and the implications for religious communities

[7] Walter Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), location 1601, Kindle.

[8] Robert London Smith, *From Strength to Strength: Shaping a Black Practical Theology for the 21st Century* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007), 184.

grounded in Northumberland County, yet reflective of a national conversation. The contextual component calls for examining the historical and contemporaneous context, an approach Smith suggests being a multi-layered investigation.[9] The project will focus on Northumberland County, as it contributed towards a larger historical, national movement by churches around education reform. The opportunity for transformation is the development and presentation of transformative civility as a way for communities to advocate for educational justice. In following Smith's method, the systematic component is the opportunity for transformation. This component is a theological reflection intended both to understand and to transform how the community thinks about itself in relation to God, thereby transforming how it can imagine and reimagine itself.

The practical transformation is for congregational leaders to have a transformed awareness of and self-drive for advocacy, where the leadership empowers the community to engage in advocacy. In following Smith's method, the hermeneutic outcome is the practical transformation. Indeed, the BETH method' output develops into the practical transformation, but Smith's hermeneutic outcome guides the case study beyond applying transformative civility towards the goal of empowering congregational leadership and community. The project's central thesis is that transformative civility is a practical theological leadership model that engages in *phronēsis* and conscientization for liberating oppressed populations with a focus on education reform.

Chapter 2 is an introduction to Northumberland County and the Black Baptist

[9] Smith, 184.

churches in the county as a present continuation of a historical tradition. This chapter will introduce prevailing themes that define the Black church tradition historically in parallel to Northumberland County. In addition, the chapter will present a crisis out of that narrative in the local, contemporaneous context drawing from the national context. This names the state of the Black Church, both historically and contemporaneously, and names the crisis of how the church deals with advocacy, with emphasis on the black church's role and the education of youth beyond the church as a theological issue. This chapter will present a focused statement of the problem and introduce Robert London Smith's BETH methodology as a way to navigate and transform the crisis.

Chapter 3 is the contextual component of the BETH method: the multi-layered investigation. It begins by examining the historical actions of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County in framing the contemporary narrative on educational justice. The chapter will analyze the historic and contemporaneous roles of Black Baptist churches on educational justice in the national narrative and locally in Northumberland County. The expansion of the multi-layered investigation will include a study of educational and behavioral disparities quantitatively (students ages 8 – 17) that will point to inaction by churches. The analysis will highlight a case study of local Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County (EMPOWER) around educational justice. This chapter will analyze the contextual component to unearth a dialectic tension in the church's role in conversations around justice: the prophetic/priestly dialectic tension.

Chapter 4 is the systematic component of the BETH method. It begins by exploring the prophetic and priestly traditions of the Black Baptist church through a brief

analysis of Joseph Jackson and Martin Luther King, Jr., as presented in the work of Peter Paris. This analysis will compare the contemporary Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County with this historic dialectic tension in naming the tension as dysfunctional civility, where action beyond ideological difference address dysfunctional civility. The chapter will resolve dysfunctional civility with transformative civility, drawing from Fluker's work, as a model for practical theological leadership, for the contemporary context. The chapter will expand transformative civility by incorporating *phronēsis* and conscientization to create a fuller definition. The chapter's expansion of transformative civility will serve as a guiding point for the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County to address education justice with transformative civility by incorporating it into congregations and communities: the focus of the project.

Chapter 5 is the hermeneutic component of the BETH method. This chapter will unpack four process steps for incorporating transformative civility into the congregations and communities of Northumberland County through the Black Baptist churches. These four process steps include training clergy on transformative civility, articulation to the congregation and community, mobilizing the community, and educating and empowering smaller groups in the community, namely parents and children.

Chapter 6 will summarize the three components of the BETH method and focus on how to evaluate short-term and long-term successes by benchmarking the four process steps. The chapter will consider how to make the BETH method a community-driven, ongoing reflection for the congregations and community towards transformative civility.

Chapter 2: The Legacy and Challenges of the Black Church

The water crashing against the shores of beaches on the Northern Neck of Virginia exhibits both the serenity and the tension present on the northernmost peninsula in Virginia. This rural landmass, with over 1,000 miles of shoreline, finds itself surrounded by the Potomac River to the north, the Chesapeake Bay to the east, and the Rappahannock River to the south.[10] The region's work in farming and fishing provides a major economic base; yet, its relative proximity to metropolitan areas makes it a vacation destination. The allure of the region's beaches and waterfront is within a two-hour radius of the metropolitan areas of Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., metropolitan areas representing 3% of the nation's population. As many visitors come to relax on the beaches, the tension of the Northern Neck is present not only on the shores, but also among the population for equal access to prosperity and success: true freedom.

Historical Legacy of the Black Church in Northumberland County

Northumberland County is the context out of which this thesis grows, and the context for which the work proposes action towards liberation. The tension in accessing economic freedom on the Northern Neck – inclusive of Northumberland, Lancaster, Westmoreland, and Richmond Counties – is a deeply painful experience for its residents of African descent. Since the end of slavery, the unspoken and unresolved tension between white and black residents lingers into the present day. I name this dualism between black and white residents as an uninterrogated reality, due to the silence around

[10] "Region 17 Northern Neck," Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, last modified September 20, 2018, accessed December 26, 2018, http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/voppd17.pdf.

race in Northumberland County in conversations; therefore, this project bifurcates race, noting a more nuanced conversation is present around race. This tension manifests itself in the worship space of African-American churches, specifically, in Black Baptist churches. As Frederick Ware suggests, black churches "employ Christian eschatology for articulation and critique of ideas about human destiny, particularly those visions of an aspiration for an improved future."[11] The Northern Neck's Black Baptist churches maintain this space of hope and worship in practices that include a revival across 31 churches in five weeks in the summer, scheduled to accommodate harvesting of corn. These churches still maintain one of the historical associations of black churches in the nation: Northern Neck Baptist Association, Inc. and its Commissions, which still gathers to strengthen the work of local churches for spiritual growth and lived equality.

Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County root their advocacy around equality from a historic tradition accented by a prominent action that occurred in 1917. An African-American man named William Page was a member of Shiloh Baptist Church, a Black Baptist church in Northumberland County, who was preparing to enter military service. Two white women alleged that he tried to assault them sexually. A group of white men took Page out of the sheriff's custody and lynched him from an oak tree in the yard of an all-black schoolhouse within four hours of the allegation on August 17, 1917.[12] The timing of the lynching paralleled the revival season on the Northern Neck, and many

[11] Frederick Ware, *African American Theology: An Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 172.

[12] Lisa Lindquist Dorr, *White Women, Rape, and the Power of Race in Virginia 1900-1960* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 187.

white residents felt the revival season would suppress anger.[13] Many white Americans viewed the black religious experience as a way to make black people docile or put "in their place."[14] However, that revival season in Northumberland County was different, where the spirit of resistance reawakened the quest for equality. The Black Baptist churches held numerous meetings after finding out the identity of one of the lynchers. The community banded together and developed an economic boycott, where black people in Northumberland County refused to trade with or work for the man believed to be one of the men who lynched Page, bringing the farmer to near economic collapse. The uprising of the black community through the Black Baptist church left "few white farmers in Northumberland County…willing to take the law into their own hands in the future after seeing their crops – their very livelihoods – jeopardized."[15] Page's lynching is the last recorded lynching in Northumberland County's history.[16] Northumberland County's local lived action of social and economic protest roots itself in and contributes to the theological foundation of Black Church tradition on the national stage.

Historical Origins of the Black Church Tradition

The black church tradition, on the historic national stage, roots itself in

[13] Dorr, 188.

[14] Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213.

[15] Dorr, 190.

[16] "Richmond Times-Dispatch August 17, 1917," Library of Congress, accessed December 28, 2018, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/pages/results/?lccn=sn83045389&dateFilterType=range&date1=08%2F17%2F1917&date2=08%2F17%2F1917&language=&ortext=&andtext=&phrasetext=&proxtext=&proxdistance=5&rows=20&searchType=advanced

reconciling the lived challenges experienced by its parishioners with the promise and vision articulated in the Bible through the life and work of Jesus Christ. Some people describe the black church through its membership and composition. In *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya define the black church as "a kind of sociological and theological shorthand reference to the pluralism of black Christian churches in the United States."[17] The black church, historically composed of seven major denominations, encompassed more than 80% of black Christians in the United States at the time of their study.[18] The Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County are members of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Though these denominations bring an ecumenical presence, the unity is not institutional. One can visit "a black church," but one cannot visit "the black church." Shiloh Baptist Church in Reedville, Virginia, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Maryland, and West Angeles Church of God in Christ in Los Angeles, California are black churches. However, none of these sites is "the black church."

The black church is a cumulative theological experience, based out of the black church's mission: a black ecclesiology. Anthony Reddie asserts, "Black ecclesiological method begins with black existential experience, not with historic mandates born of often abstract philosophical musings as to the nature of the Body of Christ."[19] The nature of the

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[17] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 1.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Anthony Reddie, "Black Ecclesiologies," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2008), 444.

church, in most times and places, is shaped by the lived experience of its parishioners. However, the black church is unique as it emphasizes experience, which shapes the church's nature and its tradition more centrally than doctrine or dogma. In *Black Theology and Black Power*, James Cone expands on the reality of the struggle of black people. "The black church was the creation of a black people whose daily existence was an encounter with the overwhelming and brutalizing reality of white power."[20] This response came from oppression not only in slavery, but also in freedom.

As an institution, the black church served as a place of liberation. J. Deotis Roberts suggests, "The very nature of the black church involves it in the mission of liberation."[21] The heart of the black church is liberation, but "liberation is not just what the church does; it is what the church is," according to James Evans.[22] This liberation extends beyond the individual to the whole community, where "the liberation of one implies the liberation of the other."[23] This institutional tradition draws from the lived experience of slavery, where the slave saw the fight for freedom as doing the work of God.[24] Cone draws a new hermeneutic for African Americans that presents a Christological view of Christ as suffering with the oppressed; therefore, Christ, deemed as being black, aligns with the life and struggles of the black church. This view of the

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[20] James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), 92.

[21] Roberts, 73.

[22] James Evans, *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 135.

[23] Ibid., 135.

[24] Cone, 94.

church's purpose creates space for hope not just spiritually, but also culturally.

As an institution, the black church was a cultural epicenter that provided moral grounding and informed African-American culture in ways that developed hope. Dale Andrews points to this hope in the black church's serving as a place of refuge. "At its heart, the church-as-refuge was a place for the critical affirmation of human value and human needs, which included liberation."[25] The affirmation African American parishioners received in the black church experience developed the church as a space of hope, as most African Americans were anonymous to the larger white society and viewed through the erasure of identity. Frederick Ware defines hope as "both the object for which persons long as well as the longing they have for the object."[26] This definition of hope points both to an aspiration and to the work that people do towards that aspiration. Parishioners of Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches historically possessed a hope paralleling Ware's definition. The aspiration was not only a spiritual quest for closeness with God in the present and the afterlife, but also a physical quest for equality with other citizens who live on the same land: "this-worldly" equality with white citizens. The unrealized quest was not the desire to become white America, but rather to achieve an authentic sense and space of freedom like white America.

The practices that point towards this hope come from the black church tradition emerging from slavery, where slaves would go into the "hush (h)arbors" as a place where

[25] Dale Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), location 410, Kindle.

[26] Ware, 172.

the slave owners would not hear them. Albert Raboteau characterizes the closeted religion of the slave. "It was more than just a Sunday meeting and then no godliness for a week. They would steal off to the fields and in the thickets and there…they called on God out of heavy hearts."[27] The hush (h)arbors became the initial meeting locations for many Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County after slavery for its familiarity.

Within the hush harbor services, W.E.B. DuBois describes the practices that pointed towards the aspiration of hope as "the preaching, the music, and the frenzy" of the black church tradition.[28] The preaching represents the spoken word of the preacher; a tradition rooted both the reading and interpreting of the Bible. The music drew from "the Bible, Protestant hymns, sermons, and African styles of singing and dancing…[to] express their faith in moving, immediate, colloquial, and often, magnificently dramatic terms."[29] The frenzy, however, is not as clear as the preaching and the music. The frenzy represented the outward response of the worship experience from the combined experience of the preaching and the music. Raboteau describes the frenzy as:

> A certain ecstasy of motion, clapping of hands, tossing of heads, which would continue without cessation about half an hour; one would lead off in a kind of recitation style, others joining in the chorus. The old house partook on the ecstasy; it rang with their jubilant shouts, and shooks [sic] in all its joints.[30]

The frenzy embodied a sense of hope despite outward challenges that existed in the

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[27] Raboteau, 217.

[28] William Edward Burghardt DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 129.

[29] Raboteau, 243.

[30] Ibid., 244.

African-American experience, and the black church tradition reflected this sentiment. As their lived experience began to improve somewhat, these practices pointed the parishioners towards both a sense of hope in the present and the promise of the afterlife. The revivals in the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County fused the preaching, music, and frenzy. Hope arose in Black Baptist churches through these worship practices and the community's outward actions in their lived environment.

Black Eschatology in the Historic Black Church

Hope, through the lens of the black church, roots itself in the sense of black eschatology. Dale Andrews suggests, "Black eschatology does not separate 'otherworldly' and 'this-worldly' hope."[31] Black eschatology, a comprehensive biblical understanding of hope, is both aspiration and action towards a better world. Frederick Ware expands Andrews' perspective on eschatology by describing it as biblical, hopeful, moral, and historical.[32] Scripture, with special emphasis on such texts as the Exodus, has shaped eschatology in the black church.

Biblical eschatology has, in turn, shaped the black church. Andrews draws on Hans Küng's work *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967) to suggest questions posed in biblical eschatology: "What does the reign of God, which is already irrupting into the present, mean for the concrete existence of [humankind], what meaning does it give to [human] life here and now?"[33] Biblical eschatology seeks to understand God's

[31] Andrews, location 541.

[32] Ware, 171-80.

[33] Andrews, location 543.

future as grounded in biblical texts and realized in history – past, present, and future – or in eternity. The black church thus constructs a black eschatology from biblical narratives. Andrews argues, "The biblical covenant narratives underpin a historical black covenant narrative as a hermeneutical device for black theology to become a prophetic, practical theology for black churches."[34] His work exemplifies a biblical eschatology that formulates theological emphases by reading biblical texts through the black church's contextual lenses. Changing contextual realities then would require a deeper interrogation of the biblical texts for its greater liberating aspects. Nevertheless, biblical eschatology in the black church creates hope for the people.

Hope, especially deliverance out of slavery, is the prevailing theme of eschatology in the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. The hopeful nature of eschatology is its ability to "take the form of comfort or solace in the face of death,"[35] be it a physical, social, or economic death as experienced in the Page lynching. The moral nature of eschatology sets a standard for ethical behaviors, noting the moral nature of the black church as part of their quest in the practice of revivals. Finally, the historical nature of eschatology reflects on how the society is progressing based on where they have traversed, as in their response to the Page lynching and outcomes of the response. These elements fuse to represent the outward action of the historic black church tradition.

Eschatology in the historic black church tradition pointed towards liberation. Andrews affirms, "The meaning of liberation should not be confined to history. If

[34] Andrews, location 145.

[35] Ware, 179.

confined to history, humanity would limit liberation. Instead, liberation effectively breaks into the present as a source of transcendence."[36] The liberation sought was more than a "this-worldly" liberation from oppression, but also an "other-worldly" liberation tied to salvation: liberation connected to a closeness with God. The "other-worldly" liberation never faltered, in creating hope, in the historic black church tradition. The sense of the saving power of Jesus Christ to liberate one from their sins remained steadfast throughout the history of the black church tradition. As the belief of liberation and freedom in the afterlife was strong, the belief of liberation and freedom in this life weakened. Andrews asserts, "The function of eschatology was inextricably linked to immediate survival. To lack future vision was to succumb to the ravages of despair and passivity."[37] The inability to envision possible change begins to weaken the sense of hope.

Hope Unborn Has Died

The cycle of oppression, generationally, caused constant pressure against hope in the black church tradition. James Weldon Johnson's poetic words to "Lift Every Voice and Sing" expresses the dismay surrounding hope in the African-American experience. Johnson writes, "Stony the road we trod; Bitter the chastening rod; Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; Yet with a steady beat; Have not our weary feet; Come to the place for which our fathers sighed."[38] Johnson laments on the struggles of African

[36] Andrews, location 555.

[37] Ibid., location 553.

[38] James Weldon Johnson and Rudolph H. Byrd, *The Essential Writings of James Weldon Johnson* (New York: Modern Library, 2008), 150.

Americans, though he celebrates entering spaces dredged by ancestors. African Americans have pressed for change for generations, where some change has happened but full equality not realized. The distinction between these two periods creates the historic black church tradition and the contemporary black church traditions.

Historically, the black church actively engaged in uplift within prophetic traditions. The history of the slave trade, slavery, emancipation, Jim Crow, and the modern Civil Rights movement evoke the prophetic tradition of uplift closely aligned to the historic black church. Peter Paris defines this tradition as "utilizing all available means to [affect] religious and moral reform in the society at large."[39] Paris emphasizes a revered tradition of the black church present in the Civil Rights era and transmitted from past generations. However, the black church's tradition shifted from the historic black church to the contemporary black church. Andrew Billingsley observes, "Black churches have stepped in to try to repair the breaches in black family life left by social, economic, and political change."[40] Billingsley's description of the contemporary black church contrasts Paris' description of the historic black church. Indeed, integration affected the black church, but the missional focus shifted.

A shift in mission became hope's demise. Paris views the historic black church as being resourceful to influence widespread change by addressing the root of the problem. Billingsley views the contemporary black church as making less communal

[39] Peter Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 11.

[40] Andrew Billingsley, *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 87.

improvements with more resources, where the contemporary black church chips away at injustice rather than eliminating the injustice. I bifurcate the historic black church and the contemporary black church in this project due to contextual realities of time and space, recognizing some deeper nuances of the conversation between the historic black church and the contemporary black church extends beyond the scope of this project. This shift in lived realities and issues presents a shift from the historic black church and the contemporary black church. The shift from the historic black church to the contemporary black church occurs around the period of integration, as numerous institutions that were once all black either no longer exist or are not frequented as often. These differences are challenged by the constancy of "the preaching, the music, and the frenzy," where these elements are not working in collaboration to create hope, as was the case in the historic black church. They operate in fragmentation for a capitalist agenda focused on church operations and individualistic ministry in the contemporary black church.[41] The shift from the historical to contemporary black church challenges these three practices.

What does it mean to preach the resurrection of Jesus? What does it mean to sing "We Shall Overcome?" What does it mean to experience a spirit-filled encounter with God? These questions resound in the comparison of historic and contemporary Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County, as well as nationwide. Contextually, the contemporary black church encounters oppression, though different from the oppression experienced by the historic black church. Integration shifted the social structure of

[41] DuBois, 129.

society and thus the communal gatherings of the black church. The hope Johnson envisioned was a collaborative community drawing from deep history to advance liberation. However, the shift out of integration caused African Americans to work less collaboratively and more individually, a sentiment reflecting hope unborn had died. The sense of dying hope asks the question of whether or not the black church itself has died.

The Village is on Fire without Water

The contemporary Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County draw from the tradition of the local and national historic black church tradition but struggle in the quest for equality in the present age due to their inability to create a sufficient foothold. Walter Fluker states this problem with the title of his work *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America*. "Post-racial" America was a term popularized in the middle part of the current decade during the administration of President Barack Obama; yet, the term lost its presence as fast as it arose. The sense was that America had met its long-denied aim of access to all Americans by electing a black man as President. The term faded as realities of rigid racism surfaced, but the term's residue remains in the minds of many Americans. In Northumberland County, the members of the community knew the post-racial America was a façade to the real problem but had no way to fight it as the Black Baptist churches were content with worship service that focused more on "other-worldly" hopes than on "this-worldly" challenges in the community. The ways that historic Black Baptist churches mobilized were lost. In the contemporary Black Baptist Church, people can see that the village is on fire, yet those with water to quench it withhold the water: the Black Baptist churches.

The end of legal segregation and the rise of integration was a double-edged sword for the African-American community and the black church. On the one hand, the ability to exist in the formerly barred parts of white America broadened the experience and exposure for African Americans: businesses, neighborhoods, schools, and so forth. On the other hand, the same movement dismantled black institutions that had created space and identity for African-American communities: businesses, neighborhoods, schools, and so forth. Though Northumberland County's neighborhoods remained divided by race, the influx of African Americans into historically white businesses and institutions decimated black businesses and institutions. The desire to acquire goods or services from white America became a benchmark for success or "making it." However, did black America truly reach the goal? As the present decade emerged and the idea of post-racialism arose, Fluker defines this post-racialism theologically as the "eschatological hope in the unrealized dream toward which African Americans continue to aspire: a non-racist society that upholds the fundamental principles of equality and freedom."[42] The effects of integration and residual-idealism of post-racial America caused the black church to lose its way in fighting for its parishioners around "this-worldly" issues.

The black church tradition's history and legacy are interwoven around the church's fight for its people. What is the black church when it stops fighting for its parishioners and community? Fluker draws on Eddie Glaude's monumental essay and

[42] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 23.

impactful thesis: "The black church, as we've known it or imagined it, is dead."[43] Glaude points to three areas in developing his argument: "Black churches have always been complicated spaces … African American communities are much more differentiated … [and the] routinization of black prophetic witness."[44] First, black churches are not monolithic but are layered and textured as they live and act in diverse contexts of time and place. Second, the differentiation of African-American communities is influenced by the fact that the church is no longer the center of all community actions, as was the case in the period immediately following the end of slavery through much of history. Other institutions have stepped in to address many issues, filling gaps that the church either did or sought to resolve. Finally, the black church's prophetic witness is a partial myth. Glaude points to the reality that, in the time of the actual prophetic witness, many churches did not stand up for justice, though many celebrate in contemporary spaces that they did stand up for justice. Glaude uses these three points to direct the conversation around the death of a conception of the black church, rather than the death of the actual strength of the black church's body politic.

Glaude's assessment of the black church's state received mixed reviews. Many local pastors suggest that Glaude is among a wave of "second- or third-generation black academics [who do not] talk to [black pastors] in the trenches. They are too elitist to talk

[43] Eddie Glaude, Jr., "The Black Church Is Dead," Huffington Post, April 25, 2010, accessed December 23, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/eddie-glaude-jr-phd/the-black-church-is-dead_b_473815.html.

[44] Glaude.

to [black pastors]."[45] However, many scholars have offered a different perspective. Anathea Butler offers an interpretation of what Glaude might mean by "dead":

> Black Church experience…[has] become a caricature. When there are movies, comedians, and rappers depicting their ideas of the Black Church…[when] you hear it every time an African American who is a good orator (including President Obama) gets that intonation just right, sounding like a prophetic black preacher. So when all you see are the caricatures of "Black Church" it feels as though you have seen it all already. Perhaps this is why Professor Glaude feels that the Black Church is dead. [The Black Church] has turned into a cliché.[46]

Butler points to Glaude's view of the Black Church as cliché, or as a memory of something that previously existed. In addition, Josef Sorett suggested that the Black Church is "'progressive yet co-opted.' This means to recognize that black Christians are [both] part and parcel of…the Protestant establishment. Yet even this view of black churches says little about what is religious in the discussion."[47] Sorett points to Glaude's view of the Black Church as trying to make a difference, but at the disposal and control of a larger narrative by mainline white Protestant denominations. Sorett's assessment closely parallels the efforts of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County, as the intent of uplift limits its reach not to "disturb the peace" of whiteness for their neighbors. These critiques challenge the true black church's state. James Cone suggests:

> By [Glaude] saying it's dead, he's challenging the black church to show it's alive. But the black church, like any institution, does not like criticism from outside the family. It wants to be prophetic against society, but it does not want intellectuals

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[45] Samuel G. Freedman, "Call and Response on the State of the Black Church," *New York Times*, April 16, 2010, accessed December 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/17/us/17religion.html.

[46] Eddie Glaude, "Updated With Response: The Black Church Is Dead—Long Live The Black Church," *Religion Dispatches*, March 15, 2010, accessed December 28, 2018, http://religiondispatches.org/bupdated-with-responseb-the-black-church-is-dead-long-live-the-black-church.

[47] Glaude, "Updated With Response."

to be prophetic against it.[48]

Cone's reflection spans the feedback from both pastors and scholars upon Glaude, suggesting the prophetic tradition needs critique. Fluker reframes Glaude's statement, with consideration of the feedback, and Fluker argues, "The black church, as we have known, loved, and imagined it, is haunted by an old ghost that has shape-shifted into the language of post-racialism."[49] This language of post-racialism becomes the black church tradition's challenge. How do Black Baptist churches frame race's struggle if society views race's lens as a past conversation? How do Black Baptist churches organize in a society where the residue of post-racialism's idea fragments racial unity?

The black church's strength – even within the Glaude's critique and Fluker's reassessment – resides in the hope. Hope's target is racial equality: an affirmation of the equality of God's creation. Fluker repeatedly points to various social benchmarks on racial equality including black unemployment, mass incarceration, and education.[50] Black unemployment has maintained a higher level than white unemployment since the measures began. The mass and supervised incarcerations of black bodies surpass the number of African Americans enslaved in 1850.[51] These are two areas where Black Baptist churches reside in a defensive position in racial equality.

Education is the space where Black Baptist churches can assume an offensive

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[48] Freedman.

[49] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 21.

[50] Ibid., 54.

[51] Alexander, 175.

position in racial equality. I name the dualism of defensive vs. offensive position of the church as a perception around the issue of power. One can argue either direction; however, I suggest that reactive engagement is defensive and proactive engagement is offensive, based on the use of power. Education becomes the avenue to address both black unemployment and mass incarceration to create equal access. According to Fluker:

> Education was viewed and used as symbolic capital, as a means of racial uplift, but it had the paradoxical disadvantage of inculcating certain habits and practices that encouraged bourgeois manners and morals, ensuring the perpetuation of difference and religious and theological interpretations of human subjectivity.[52]

Education had uplifting social outcomes. In the historic black church, education served as a tool for uplifting African Americans communally; yet, in the contemporary black church, it serves more often to uplift African Americans individually. Segregation limited the realization of equal access through education; yet, after integration, the fragmentation of the black church fragmented the push for education of African-American students in an integrated society. Education, as Fluker suggests, was a tool not for racial uplift of African Americans as a whole, but pockets of African Americans. The idea of education in W. E. B. DuBois's "The Talented Tenth" was for the top 10% of the population to become educated to come back for the other 90%.[53] The elitism gained by education has instead become a dividing line for many people. In Northumberland County, many residents become skeptical of educated African Americans as their motives are not clear from prior experiences; thus, education raises suspicion in Black Baptist churches, even

[52] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 26.

[53] William Edward Burdghardt DuBois, "The Talented Tenth (1903)," Teaching American History, accessed December 28, 2018, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-talented-tenth/.

though the parishioners push for and desire education.

As education serves as the object of hope, the vehicle for that hope is through the black church's leadership. Fluker suggests, "Despite inadequate material and social resources, the black church tradition is a prime candidate for offering direction for the development of leaders for our national and transnational communities."[54] These communities offer direction and guidance in organizing communities to gain access to the true hope and essence of education. Though the black church presents this avenue, Fluker considers the challenges present in black church tradition's leadership around education.

> The civilizing influences of education, despite great ideological divides as to which type was most effective for uplift, had a paradoxical impact on black leadership in respect to the public practices of recognition, respect, prestige, and loyalty to democratic values that created a dilemma.[55]

Fluker points to an individualistic need for black religious leaders to move from anonymity in society – the erasure of black bodies from prevailing narratives – to a space of recognition as a fragmenting element in black church tradition.

The need for self-recognition over communal empowerment is the basis for Glaude's argument. Fluker expands this argument out of Glaude's thesis. "Prophetic activism … has been anesthetized by the controlling dramas of possessive individualism and religious narcissism."[56] This sentiment is present in Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches. The focus on "this-worldly" concerns can turn the quest for individual

[54] Fluker, "Introduction: The Failure of Ethical Leadership," 13.

[55] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 37.

[56] Ibid., 23.

access to capital and resources, rather than a communal quest to capital and resources. Jonathan Walton argues, "Unless Afro-Protestants becomes less consumed with building institutions characterized by tribal-racial insularity, autocratic-cult of personalities, idolatrous inward-oriented, and henotheistic theologies, it might as well be [dead]."[57] A greater desire for individual needs consumes the space to address communal needs. The black church's power remains, but its aim and mission have misdirection. Though some may suggest Johnson's poetic words – "hope unborn has died" – may ring true, the actual black church, even in its misconceptualization, is not dead.

The black church is not dead; the community that formed it and the challenges that framed it still exist. The process of working out the challenges that framed the historic black church is not clear in the present. However, the approach the black church takes in its present state follows the approach taken by the historic church. The use of the same method, while expecting different results, is insanity. People have a clear direction for neither change nor rebirth. Therefore, the black church needs to rethink how it will approach liberating practices, and how it can give particularized attention to education through the work of the black church leadership.

Rethinking the Method

The restoration of hope in the black church tradition must apply a practical theological method that considers the black church tradition at its core. Robert London Smith offers such a method. He says that the praxis of the contemporary black church

[57] Glaude, "Updated With Response."

"demands its critical engagement with the realities of historical contextual locations, the values, and meanings that are in and around human action, Christian tradition, and the normative texts of black faith."[58] Smith defines *praxis* as "a kind of action that is informed by theory and is guided by an ultimate purpose."[59] Thus, the action of the community, guided by its beliefs and purpose, are defining for the community.

Smith's Black Existential and Theological Hermeneutic (BETH) offers a path to the rebirth hope in the black church tradition that can be valuable for the particular interests and focus on the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. The BETH method "recognizes the importance of both existential and theological considerations in developing and transforming black church *praxis*…[where] existential and theological considerations [are] engaged in an interpretive and re-interpretive process that is mutually critical and binding." [60] The BETH method considers the historic and contemporary contextual and theological responses of black churches and their associated communities. The historic context "helped shape black consciousness in America and was the thematic backdrop against which blacks came to understand who they were and through which they began to interpret the world around them."[61] The historical theological responses encompassed "processes… [that] embraced the critical and reflective inquiry into what

[58] Smith, 161.

[59] Ibid., 42.

[60] Ibid., 166.

[61] Ibid., 92.

the black church was doing in the world: praxis."[62] These factors create the BETH method, which unearths what is present within the community to guide the community to a renewed sense of living and being: a renewed hope.

BETH is a three-stage approach to shape a newly informed *praxis* and way of thinking, practicing, living, and being. I introduce the three-stage approach in brevity here with elaboration in later chapters. The first stage is the contextual component, a multi-layered investigation that "articulates the particularity of the social, historical, and cultural locations that have helped shape the African American faith community."[63] This stage describes the historic and contemporary contexts that shaped and shape congregations and communities. The second stage is the systematic component, a mutual-critical conversation that "contains the normative texts of the black faith, which include black religious tradition, doctrinal positions, worship styles, Afro-centric renderings of biblical narratives, black spirituals and gospel music, and black culture."[64] This stage assesses the congregations' motivating factors through moral guidance, both historically and contemporaneously, and helps build a theological framework for the local context. Finally, the third stage is the hermeneutic outcome that reorients the community to a newly informed praxis.[65] The final stage combines the contextual and theological stages to reshape practices the community can use to change their lived reality.

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[62] Smith, 104.

[63] Ibid., 166.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 188.

The presumed death of the imagined black church only happens if the institution continues the same actions while expecting different results. The church needs to change its *praxis*, which can change expectations and social reality. Hope unborn may have died; yet, hope rebirthed can live. The latter requires a contextual introspection to determine the conditions that formed and form the present communal situation. To accomplish this, we turn to the contextual component of the BETH method in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Contextualizing the Challenges in Northumberland County

This third chapter interrogates context. As the previous chapter focused on the historic and contemporary contexts of the black church, this chapter focus on the historic and contemporary contexts of church praxis in Northumberland County, especially as regards education. The concerns at hand are the systems and issues that caused the loss of hope in the black church tradition in the area of education. These concerns highlight where the community presently finds itself before moving to where the community desires to be in a renewal of hope. Yet, a renewal of hope requires introspection into what is happening in Northumberland County.

The BETH Method's Multi-layered Investigation

This introspection happens through contextual analysis, aided by Robert London Smith's BETH method. Smith names this analysis as a multi-layered investigation, the first stage of the BETH method. It is multi-layered because it does not describe what is simply on the surface, but exposes the deeper layers within the context that shape the environment of the congregation and community. "The purpose of this stage is to uncover and make explicit the assumptions, values, and meanings that inform all *praxis*, but which largely remain hidden, and to identify the particular thematic contexts that generate them," Smith states.[66] Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County have many un-interrogated practices dating back to the slavery and Jim Crow periods of American history, which African Americans practiced for survival, but now linger as

[66] Smith, 184.

"tradition." The multi-layered investigation elucidates the un-interrogated areas of *praxis*.

The multi-layered investigation focuses on two areas of inquiry to determine what is present with the context. The first area involves "questions that focus on the *praxis* situation that is the crux of concern for the congregation…What are we doing? Why are we doing it?"[67] This question assesses the state of the congregation on the surface in helping them to name not only the present challenges, but also the present practices surrounding or addressing those challenges. At times, the inability to articulate the problem is part of the problem, and Smith's method begins to provide language to the local congregation and community, not only in naming their challenge but also in stepping up to that challenge. The second area involves "questions which deal with the contextual locations – historical and contemporary – that influence existing *praxis*…Who are we?...Where are we?"[68] These are important questions for the Northumberland County Black Baptist churches as they excavate their purpose and history within their context. Smith suggests, "Through the investigative efforts of this stage, those implicit historical, cultural, religious, and theological factors that shape what we do in the church are made explicit, thus making them available for further reflection and revision."[69]

The particularization of Smith's method for Northumberland County will consider the local and national narratives because the story of Northumberland County has contributed to and been impacted by the national context of educational justice for

[67] Smith, 184.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 185

African Americans. The method also needs to focus on the two areas of inquiry noted above: how do communities name the challenges before them and name their identities. The multi-layered investigation of this chapter analyzes movements in the historic local and national contexts and in the contemporary national context, then turns to the contemporary local context. Drawing upon all of these narratives, the Black Baptist churches of Northumberland County represent a microcosm within that larger narrative.

Historic Local Context

The history of education and the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County dates back to the period of slavery. Northumberland County is in the southern part of the United States and it maintained a strong system of slavery before its abolition in the United States. Slave masters allowed particular slaves the opportunity for literacy for the sole purpose of reading the Bible for instruction and edification in the Christian faith.[70] Slave masters forbade their slaves from reading anything beyond the Bible and, at times, redacted what was available for reading from the Bible to convey a particular message of servitude between the master and the slave.

Many slave owners became leery of slaves becoming literate, as they would have the ability to read more than just the Bible. Virginia passed laws as early as 1819 to make the teaching of black people how to read illegal.[71] The recodification of these laws was enacted in 1849, as recorded in the Code of Virginia records:

Every assemblage of Negroes for the purpose of religious worship, when such

[70] Raboteau, 115-6.

[71] General Assembly of Virginia, *The Revised Code of the Laws of Virginia 1819* (Richmond, VA: Thomas Ritchie, 1819), 424.

> worship is conducted by a Negro, and every assemblage of Negroes for the purpose of instruction in reading or writing, or in the night time for any purpose, shall be an unlawful assembly. Any justice may issue his warrant to any officer or other person, requiring him to enter any place where such assemblage may be, and seize any Negro therein; and he, and any other justice, may order such Negro to be punished with stripes.[72]

The 1849 law emphasized places of religious worship being the space for training and barred slaves from teaching one another how to read. Because the law limited the ability to train slaves to read the Bible, people protested. According to Raboteau, "Concern for the slaves' religious state led the Dover Baptist Association [of Ashland, Virginia] to protest in 1850 against the law forbidding slave literacy."[73] Ashland was an area that exchanged commerce with Northumberland County; thus, the concerns in Ashland would have likely existed in Northumberland County during that period.

At the end of slavery, the slaves attempted to build communities in an American system that did not include the newly freed population in the plan for success. The historical actions of Black Baptist churches in post-slavery Northumberland County focused on filling the gaps created by limited funding to uplift the community; one primary way was through education. Many of the Black Baptist churches supported an educational institution known as Rosenwald Schools: all-black schools in the segregated rural south. In the early 20th century, Julius Rosenwald, then President of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, was in close conversation with Booker T. Washington – founder of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) – in constructing

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[72] General Assembly of Virginia, *The Code of Virginia 1849* (Richmond, VA: William F. Ritchie, 1849), 747.

[73] Raboteau, 171.

schools across the rural south to educate African-American youth who lacked access to education in stark contrast to their white counterparts.[74] Thomas Wright Morris, a former pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Reedville, Virginia, asserts, "Of the 368 [Rosenwald] schools [nationally], twenty were located in the Northern Neck of Virginia, and five were located in Northumberland County."[75] The presence of Rosenwald schools provided uplift for the community, where the Black Baptist churches, particularly Shiloh Baptist Church, played a critical role in the school's survival.

Before integration, white students proceeded through local, publicly funded schools that pinnacled at Northumberland High School. However, the African-American students in the region attended local, privately funded schools that pinnacled at the Julius Rosenwald High School in Reedville, Virginia. Any public funds received by the all-black schools were minimal, not supporting equal status with white schools; therefore, these schools received funds mostly from private institutions, namely the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. These privately funded schools did not carry the same connotation as present-day privatized education, as there was no public alternative for African-American students in Northumberland County. These schools received the used, nearly obsolete textbooks of white schools dating more than ten years after their initial use. The funding for these schools came heavily through the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County until the end of segregation.

The expansion of the work of Rosenwald schools flowed into the church's work.

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[74] Thomas Wright Morris, *A Church on a Country Road* (Reedville, VA: Maple Shade, 2007), 33.

[75] Ibid., 34.

Morris asserts, "The pastors of Shiloh [Baptist Church] were the principals of the school for a total of 27 of its 41-year existence. Fundraising was a joint effort of Church and Academy for the mutual goal of developing a *civil citizenry*."[76] Morris defines a *civil citizenry* as a citizen or group of citizens exposed to both faith and education to enlighten, enable, and elevate the individual and community.[77] The Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County attempted to create this environment of social uplift, as institutions of faith, for the parishioners and the community. However, the historical context of Northumberland County was part of a historic national movement.

Historic National Context

The historic national context paralleled the historic local context. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham profiles the work in the historic national context when she asserts, "The black Baptist women's conventions insisted that upward mobility for individuals and African Americans as a group depended primarily upon education."[78] Education played a critical role in racial uplift in the late 19th century, where the Black Baptist Church, guided by the women, focused much attention on developing institutions of learning at all levels of education. "Their fund-raising drives, children's bands, self-denial days, and even temperance crusade all reinforced this message and influenced many poor, uneducated blacks to divert money from personal consumption into the building of

[76] Morris, 35.

[77] Ibid., 11.

[78] Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 63.

schools."[79] Higginbotham points to a collaborative spirit among not only Black Baptist churches, but also in and among the African-American community to band together for social uplift in this period. The uplift did not affect just a few individuals or families, but it spanned the entire community and the community both saw and felt the benefits.

The importance of education to the Black Baptist Church spanned all levels of education. However, in a similar response to the historic local context of Northumberland County with the Rosenwald Schools, many northern White Baptist Churches aimed to provide support to the Black Baptist churches' work in the southern states. The American Baptist Home Mission Society's (ABHMS) women's auxiliaries in New England focused on educating black leaders to go back south and educate their local communities. The ABHMS training led to leaders building and developing institutions, where many White Baptist churches supported the educational aims. Among these institutions, in their present nomenclature, were Virginia Union University (Richmond, Virginia), Morehouse College (Atlanta, Georgia), Spelman College (Atlanta, Georgia), Shaw University (Raleigh, North Carolina), Benedict College (Columbia, South Carolina), Fisk University (Nashville, Tennessee), and Jackson State University (originally Natchez Seminary in Natchez, Mississippi).[80] These institutions focused originally on training men to become preachers and women to become teachers. The challenges of the period's gender discrimination further complicated the racial discrimination encountered by African-American women, a space of gendered second-class citizenship.

[79] Higginbotham, 63.

[80] Ibid., 21.

Anna Julia Cooper was among the prominent activists for equality in education not only in race, but also in gender. The inequity around gender came out of a cultural construct surrounding the need to protect women. Cooper affirms:

> Men [have been given] a rule and guide for the estimation of woman as an equal, as a helper, as a friend, and as a sacred charge to be sheltered and cared for with a brother's love and sympathy. [Yet, the] lessons which nineteen centuries' gigantic strides in knowledge, arts, and sciences, in social and ethical principles have not been able to probe to their depth or to exhaust in practice.[81]

Cooper points out that the advancement of knowledge in world history had not advanced knowledge of gender equity, including equity within the newly freed African-American community. The African-American men viewed the education of men as a higher priority than the education of women; however, Cooper took a different perspective. She asserts, "The earnest well trained Christian young woman…is as potent a missionary agency among our people as is the theologian; and I claim that at the present state of our development in the South, she is ever more important and necessary."[82] Cooper went on to open institutions that trained African-American women, opening educational access to them. Another leader in this work was Nannie Helen Burroughs.

Burroughs represents a shift in Black Baptist churches on issues of education and gender equality. A Virginia native, she led the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBCUSA) to create a National Training School for Women and Girls in 1909.[83] The

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[81] Anna J. Cooper, Charles C. Lemert, and Esme Bhan*, The Vice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including A Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters.* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), location 1017, Kindle.

[82] Ibid., location 1550.

[83] Higginbotham, 158.

NBCUSA is the convention to which Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County belonged at that time and still belong. The convention identified "with the working poor and its concern for the employment options of black women led to the establishment of an industrial school rather than a liberal arts college…[with the] motto: Work. Support thyself. To thine own powers appeal."[84] The development of an industrial school rather than a liberal arts college created an on-going debate between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois on the "proper education" needed to seek equality within the larger white society. Washington suggested that African Americans needed education focused on productivity (farming, building, and other forms of manual labor) as a means of survival and trading with the larger society. DuBois argued that African Americans needed education in the classics as a means toward conversing and working in the larger society. This debate was central in the conversations in Black Baptist churches, and the convention sided with Washington as it related to women at that time. The historic national context of education and the church's role was complex, but clearly gave high priority to education for the whole race and increasingly across gender lines.

Contemporary National Context

Some people argue that the period studied here as the "historic black church" ends with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. The 1960s served as a tumultuous decade for the United States and, more urgently, for African Americans. The 1950s handed the community and the nation the Brown v. Board of Education decision by the

[84] Higginbotham, 210.

Supreme Court (1954), which opened a pathway to integrate schools. The 1960s handed the community and nation the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by the federal legislative branch (both houses of Congress) and signed by the executive branch (President Lyndon B. Johnson). However, the assassination of so many prominent black and white leaders – leaders focused on improving the lives of African Americans – dampened the spirit of progress. It is at this dividing line that the contemporary black church emerges.

The contemporary national context of educational justice raises two questions: the churches' role in supporting education and the actual education of African American peoples. On the first question, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya's seminal work *The Black Church in the African American Experience* offers a comprehensive analysis of the black church. Though they analyze data from the 1990s, their descriptions of the black church and the African-American community still reverberate in communities. They report that 88.3% of Black Baptist churches support historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs),[85] although the resources vary from congregation to congregation. The level of support for HBCUs, overall, has shifted in recent times due to the rise in African American attending integrated colleges and universities. Both attendance and support for HBCUs have declined. Even so, Lincoln and Mamiya point out that black churches still contribute to HBCUs.

The second question of education in the black community reveals that the desire

[85] Lincoln, 171-2.

for social uplift often comes out of their own experience and desires of educational attainment. In 2014, Pew Research analyzed the education attainment of U.S. religious groups. Their research compares the various denominations in attaining college degrees. The black church traditions named – African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Baptist Convention, and the Church of God in Christ – are all below the national average of U.S. adults at 27%. Of the membership of the National Baptist Convention, 19% have a college degree, 27% have some college, 40% are high school graduates, and 14% have some high school, meaning that they did not finish high school.[86] The percentages are relatively close for all three named Black Baptist church traditions, even though the African Methodist Episcopal Church has a slightly higher percentage of college graduates and the Church of God in Christ has a slightly lower percentage.[87] In the Black Baptist Church, 81% of its members do not have a college degree, in comparison with 73% of all U.S. adults, 63% of the United Methodist Church, 53% of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and 44% of the Episcopal Church.[88] I name these particular denominations, as they are the prominent mainline-Protestant denominations on the Northern Neck.

The focus on education by a congregation comes not only by its educational attainment, but also by how the clergy positions itself for higher education. Lincoln and Mamiya suggest, "The differences among the historically black denominations regarding

[86] "Educational Attainment of U.S. Religious Groups," Pew Research Center, November 3, 2016, accessed April 21, 2018, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/04/the-most-and-least-educated-u-s-religious-groups/ft_16-10-06_educationreligiousgroups/.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

the support of educational institutions are related to their historical and social class differences and their differing requirements for ordination to the ministry."[89] They present a somewhat monolithic assessment of Black Baptist Church when they offer, "The independent polity of the Baptist [church] has only required evidence of a divine calling with no educational requirements."[90] Lincoln and Mamiya's reductionist perspective creates a monolithic view of Black Baptist churches. In fact, the higher the social class and the greater the presence of college degrees in Black Baptist churches, the higher is the expectation for the educational preparation of its ordained ministers. The converse is also true. Since the Pew data reveal overall fewer college degrees in Black Baptist churches, Lincoln and Mamiya could easily reach their broad-brush stroke conclusion.

The clergy member's educational attainment affects how the church views its role in education. Lincoln and Mamiya's work includes the educational level for clergy in rural Black Baptist churches. They report that among clergy in rural communities, 13.3% are college graduates, 27.3% have graduate degrees (40.6% have college degrees), 13.3% have some college, 21% are high school graduates, and 25.1% have less than completed high school education.[91] This level of educational attainment suggests that in rural areas clergy members' educational level is higher than their parishioners'. When comparing the Pew data across urban, suburban, and rural communities, 81% of parishioners have no

[89] Lincoln, 172.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid., 99.

college degree, in comparison with 59.4% of clergy in Black Baptist churches. These percentages represent a remnant of slavery in which the clergy was the "learned" member who educated and instructed the masses.[92] In addition, it presents the efforts of the historic national movement to ensure that a learned class of preachers and teachers would be available to educate the African-American community. This overview of the national context provides a pathway for understanding the local contemporary context.

Contemporary Local Context

The historic local and national contexts come into conversation with the contemporary national context to ground the contemporary local context. In considering previous sections of this chapter, the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County are in a fragmented state in relation to the previous contextual analyses. Historically, the Black Baptist churches banded together for the sake of justice and liberation, as they saw their plight as a common plight and their struggle as a common struggle. However, the movement away from the historic black church to the contemporary black church presents the rise of individualism, even among congregations within the same community and denomination. The Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County struggle with maintaining a sufficient level of membership and attendance. Northumberland County is a retirement community with an aging population. 30.1% of the population in Northumberland County is over 65 years of age, in comparison to a 12.1% distribution in

[92] The scope of this project does not include homiletics. However, the inherent drive for preachers to preach on the 8th grade level – where many are exposed to higher intellectual knowledge and conversations most at church – is problematic for educational advancements of churches and congregations.

Virginia and 13.0% across the United States.[93] Therefore, many churches recognize the slow migration of new families to the region, where the tension and battle between churches are attracting members of one congregation to another to demonstrate their strength in numbers. This level of fragmentation makes unity very challenging.

The added component is the sociological challenges present in Northumberland County. Regarding educational attainment, the county's demographics show 7.8% have graduate degrees, 19.6% have college degrees (27.4% college degrees overall), 24.4% have some college, 31.3% are high school graduates, and 16.9% have less than completed high school education.[94] These percentages represent the entire county, noting the county's African-American population attained less education than white citizens did. The educational levels work in conjunction with the job prospects in the region. The average wage per job in the United States is $48,301 and $52,072 in Virginia. However, the average wage per job in Northumberland County is $32,987.[95] The history of Northumberland County's wealth from fishing and agriculture slowed down substantially over recent decades over challenges of globalization; therefore, these once prosperous industries are fading and demand for a skilled, learned, and technical workforce emerges, as it does on the national stage. The Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County have not adapted to this changing dynamic. In making matters worse, the Black Baptist

[93] "2018 Northern Neck Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy," The Northern Neck Planning District Commission," April 18, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, http://www.northernneck.us/ceds/.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

churches were not aware of the crisis present around educational justice in the public school system that educated the youth they saw Sunday after Sunday.

Expanding Historical Perspectives on Education in Northumberland County

The interpretation of student performance in the public school system must accompany a narrative of Northumberland County Public Schools (NCPS) following Brown v. Board. The process of integrating NCPS was not a simple process. The social separation in rural eastern Virginia – resulting from housing discrimination – made coming together a challenging process. [96] Therefore, NCPS created a school that was separate but "equal" following the Brown v. Board for nearly thirteen years – Central High School – resulting in the closure of Julius Rosenwald High School in Reedville, Virginia. White students attended Northumberland High School, and black students attended Central High School, a paralleled resistance to the City of Norfolk, Virginia and Prince Edward County, Virginia.[97] The schools merged around 1967, where the county's black students began attending Northumberland High School. Nevertheless, current residents, who were students at the time of integration, are members of the community who are 65 years of age or older and a large majority are in all of the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. These parishioners remember the arduous and

[96] An analysis of housing discrimination is beyond the scope of this project. However, the action of redlining by the Federal Government in the mid-20th century impacted not only urban and suburban spaces, but also rural communities, which has implications into education and inequalities in educational access.

[97] This is beyond the scope of this project. However, Kristen Green's *Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2015) profiles the aftermath of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas in Prince Edward County, Virginia in their efforts to block integration by shutting down the entire school system for five years: 1959 – 1964.

painful process of being trailblazers for the integration process.

Educational Disparity

The time between schools integrating and the present day is quite short: 52 years in Northumberland County. However, a disparity in accessing educational equality between white and black students still exists. Virginia measures school performance on a benchmark known as the "Standards of Learning" (SOL). Former Governor Mark Warner implemented the SOLs around the year 2000 and then former President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act galvanized the SOL. The SOL looks for incremental success to determine if a school is improving or faltering in academically advancing its students. If a school is improving, the school receives or maintains its accreditation and state funding. If a school is faltering, the school risks losing its accreditation, and thereby losing state funding for the school or school system. If a cohort – a particular grade level in a particular academic year – does not pass the benchmark individually, the Commonwealth of Virginia allowed for an average of that cohort's score with the past two cohorts from that grade to present a three-year rolling average. If that rolling average was at or above the benchmark, the school received or maintained accreditation. If that rolling average did not meet the benchmark, the school faced probation or the possibility of losing accreditation in instances of multiple years of not meeting the benchmark.

When NCPS reported its test scores to the public, it sought to inform the community on the accreditation of the three schools comprising NCPS: Northumberland Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. Parishioners of Black Baptist churches began to attend school board meetings more regularly in recent years, but only responded to the

information given to them by NCPS. NCPS reported the test scores of 7th graders for the 2011-2012 academic year in 2012, the test scores of 7th graders for the 2012-2013 academic year in 2013, and the test scores of 7th graders for the 2013-2014 academic year in 2014. This cycle continued year after year. Most families are concerned about their individual child(ren); therefore, they would be concerned about how 7th grade performs around the time their child approaches and engages 7th grade. However, NCPS does not finalize education in 7th grade; NCPS aims to graduate students in their progression towards graduating at the end of 12th grade.

The reality is that metrics presented to the public in school board meetings reflect a desire and need to maintain capital and institutions. The intent to focus on the development of individual groups of students become lost with accreditation looming over the system, until the students' performance jeopardizes that accreditation. A reassessment of progress would not entail following 7th grade every year, but to follow the class of 2017. NCPS should have reported the test scores of 7th graders for the 2011-2012 academic year in 2012, the test scores of 8th graders for the 2012-2013 academic year in 2013, and the test scores of 9th graders for the 2013-2014 academic year in 2014. This approach tracks students in cohorts.

The act of tracking student test scores, by cohort, requires a longitudinal student of student test scores. The project will focus on a longitudinal study of test scores in a critical subject: English Reading. The foundation of all education is the ability to read and communicate thoughts and ideas. The English Reading SOL is a literacy indicator,

even considering the controversy surrounding testing among minority groups.[98] In Virginia, the benchmark for success is that 75% of a cohort taking the test in a class (i.e., 7th graders in the 2011-2012 academic year) must pass the SOL. A failure to meet this benchmark follows the process as mentioned earlier. Virginia tests students across the Commonwealth on English Reading in grades 3 – 8 and again in the 11th grade, except for instances of makeup or remediation. This project will focus on grades 3 – 8 (elementary and middle schools) to focus on developmental stages of literacy, to simplify the interpretation, and to create greater continuity in the data.

Appendix I presents the longitudinal study for test scores for students by cohort in tabular form. It represents an adaptation of publicly available data from the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE). As it is publicly available, its presentation ensures the anonymity of the student in grades 3 – 8 in the academic of years between 2008 and 2016. As the students' ages ranged from 8 years of age to 14 years of age, the anonymity ensures the protection of children, a protected population. Appendix I represents students enrolled in NCPS during the 2016-2017 academic year. The "current grade" represents the grade of enrollment for that particular cohort during the 2015-2016 academic year. The "grade of testing" represents the passing rate for that cohort when that cohort was in that respective "grade of testing." As an example, Appendix I shows that the Class of 2017 (12th graders in the dataset) achieved a passing rate of 87.5% when they were 4th graders and 83.6% when they were 7th graders. However, the current 7th graders (Class of

[98] The discussion surrounding biases towards people of color in standardized testing is beyond the scope of this project. This project focuses on English Reading while intentionally not addressing the issue of biases, as the issue of bias is outside of the project's parameters and, ultimately, intent of the project.

2022) have N/A, meaning not applicable, for their 7th and 8th test scores for English Reading because they have not taken the tests for those grade levels.

Appendix II transforms the tabular data of the longitudinal study from Appendix I into a graphical representation, where this project will present the remaining data sets in graphical form drawing background tables modeling Appendix I. The graphs will use consistent scales representing the data and colors representing the cohorts. Appendix II has a light blue line labeled 12, meaning 12th graders in the 2016-2017 academic year: the Class of 2017. In addition, the graph has a solid black line at 75%, a representation of the benchmark required to pass the SOL for English Reading.

Appendix II presents the SOL reading scores for all students enrolled in NCPS for the 2016-2017 academic year. The majority of the data points fall above the benchmark. However, there is an anomaly in performance for the 9th-grade class. This cohort, individually, has never passed the English Reading SOL. It would be nearly impossible to detect this failure as Black Baptist churches, as NCPS only provided year-by-year data of the individual grades without showing continuity at the cohort level. A parent of a student in the Class of 2020 would be the sole chance of following this in a system focused on accreditation. In addition, the rolling average would absorb the cohort failure, unless another cohort did not meet the benchmark in prior years.

As Appendix II provides insight into each cohort, the VDOE had identified an achievement gap with state data sets, where one of the gap groups is for African-

American students, and it is termed "Gap Group 2."[99] A gap group is a subset of students identified as having historic achievement gaps that require closer monitoring.[100] VDOE's public data also includes gender and racial makeup at the cohort level. What happens when race divides the cohort and the analysis of Appendix II happens across racial lines? Before expanding Appendix II, the racial makeup of NCPS across 2009 – 2015 has been nearly consistent at 53% white students and 38.2% black students according to the Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education (OCR).[101] Due to, the limited scope of this project will not cover the 8.8% of the students who represent Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or of two or more races.[102] The data set is so small for these students that VDOE does not report them in the data because it would not allow their identity to remain anonymous. This report will focus on 91.2% of the student population. The expansion of Appendix II begins with assessing the racial dynamic.

Appendices III and IV demonstrate the performance in English Reading for white student and black student respectively. Appendix III presents 89.5% of white cohort groups score meeting the benchmark, where in contrast, Appendix IV presents 31.6% of

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[99] "School Improvement and Reform," Virginia Department of Education, accessed December 31, 2018, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/school_improvement/index.shtml.

[100] Virginia has identified three gap groups. Group 1 includes "Students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students, regardless of race and ethnicity." Group 2 includes "African-American students, not of Hispanic origin, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1." Group 3 includes "Hispanic students, of one or more races, including those also counted in Proficiency Gap Group 1." This project's limited scope will focus on Group 2, which is inclusive of African-American students in Group 1.

[101] "Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2015: District Enrollment."

[102] Ibid.

black cohort groups meeting the benchmark. An extracted example from this data set is following the 11th graders: the orange line. Both the white and black cohorts have high pass rates in 3rd grades. However, after 6th grade, a greater disparity happens. At their 8th grade year, the white cohort had a pass rate of ~90%, where the black cohort had a pass rate of ~55%. This disparity for these students is how they enter high school, where remediation is minimal if even present.

Appendix V represents the variance of pass rates between white students and black students as a comparative analysis of Appendices III and IV. A positive value indicates that white students outperformed black students in that cohort at that rate difference; a negative value indicates black students outperformed white students in that cohort at that rate difference. Virginia generally identifies an achievement gap as a difference of 10% or more, both positive and negative. In Appendix V, the definition of the achievement gap excludes six data points from the data presented. Therefore, 15.8% of the data has closed the achievement gap; however, 84.2% of the data demonstrates an extreme gap. The 11th-grade cohort's 8th-grade testing demonstrates one of the higher variance points between white and black cohorts within the same class. This disparity shows the ability to grasp the English language, in the cognitive skill of reading, is lacking among black students compared to white students in the same cohort.

VDOE's data includes not only race, but also gender. Appendices VI and VII expand Appendix IV to breakdown the data on black students within cohorts into data

sets by race and gender.[103] Appendix VI presents 50% of black female cohorts by class having a passing rate, where Appendix VII presents that 23.7% of black male cohorts by class have a passing rate. The data suggest that black males perform at a much lower rate than black females. Appendix VI shows only one data point (2.6% of the data) below a 50% pass rate for black females, being the 7th-grade cohort in their 6th grade English Reading SOL. However, Appendix VII shows 31.5% of the data below a 50% pass rate for black males. Black males struggle not only in passing the English Reading SOL, but also in reading English.

An extracted example from this comparative data set is following the 9th graders: the yellow line. In recalling Appendix II, as an entire cohort, the group has never met the pass rate for the English Reading SOL. In recalling Appendix III, the white students in this cohort met the pass rate each time except once: 5th grade. Appendix IV shows that black students in this cohort never met the pass rate. However, the highest pass rate for black students in this cohort is ~67%. Unpacking the data for black students in this cohort gives greater clarity in Appendices VI and VII. Appendix VI shows that the black females in this cohort met the pass rate of 50% of the time with the lowest pass rate of ~54%, an assessment showing literacy challenges among black females. However, Appendix VII reveals that the crisis in the cohort is among black males. The black males in this cohort never met the pass rate. The highest pass rate black males in this cohort achieved were 60%, a value equal to the lowest pass rate for the entire cohort.

[103] VDOE does not address gender fluidity in its data, so this project will present binary gender as either male or female.

The educational data presented demonstrate a disparity in educational advancement, where black students are reading far below grade level and the remediation of present-day illiteracy is unclear. Black Baptist churches were not aware of the situation. The fatalistic response to the disparity between white and black students rested in the sentiment "it has always been this way." With an unclear pathway to remedy grade level literacy, behavioral and disciplinary problems emerge.

Behavioral-Disciplinary Disparity

Illiteracy within the school system has alarming indicators in other areas of performance and opportunities. Black students – whose ancestors lacked historic access to some advancement opportunities – see opportunities for academic advancement as "stuff for white people." The challenges around this indoctrination become clear in opportunities such as the Gifted and Talented Program. As a constant reminder, NCPS has a population of 53% white students and 38.2% black students. However, Appendix VIII presents the enrollment in the Gifted and Talented program reported by OCR at nearly 80% for white students for four years (2011 – 2015) and 10-15% for black students for the same period. The outputs of reading proficiency tie directly to access for opportunities such as the Gifted and Talented Program. The imbalance in demographics for the Gifted and Talented Program for black students have a greater perspective by the representation of black students around discipline.

Appendices IX and X present publicly reported data issued by OCR on in-school and out-of-school suspensions at NCPS over six years. In both appendices, white students make up an average of ~35%. However, black students make up an average of 52-55%.

The gravity of this disparity is not clear in raw numbers. However, Appendices XI and XII paint the pictures of the disparity. Appendix II details how white students contribute to the district enrollment, the Gifted and Talented Program, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. Concerning their district enrollment, white students are overrepresented in the Gifted and Talented Program and underrepresented in in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Concerning their district enrollment, black students have an underrepresentation in the Gifted and Talented Program but overrepresentation in in-school and out-of-school suspensions. Therefore, black students lack the advancement and tools needed to become productive citizens in society.

Organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have pointed out that disciplinary structures like in-school and out-of-school suspension promote the school-to-prison pipeline. The ACLU describes this problem when they suggest:

> The 'school-to-prison pipeline' … [is where] children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse, or neglect, and would benefit from additional educational and counseling services….'Zero-tolerance' policies criminalize minor infractions of school rules, while cops in schools lead to students being criminalized for behavior that should be handled inside the school. Students of color are especially vulnerable to push-out trends and the discriminatory application of discipline.[104]

The ACLU's assessment rings loud in Northumberland County. Every school in Northumberland County has a School Resource Officer who is a deputy within the local Sheriff's Office. Many actions that found resolution with the school's administration now

[104] "School-to-Prison Pipeline," American Civil Liberties Union, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://www.aclu.org/issues/racial-justice/race-and-inequality-education/school-prison-pipeline.

find a referral to the Sheriff's Office. This trend is following the reflection of Michelle Alexander: "Young [black] men are more likely to go to prison than go to college."[105] The inability to read positions one for a cycle of low expectations and low results. The analysis of educational data and behavioral-discipline data presents a bleak outlook for the African-American community in Northumberland County. The presentation of this data to the local community led to the development of a local clergy group that grew into a collaboration of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County.

Case Study: The Formation and Beginnings of EMPOWER

"Equipping Minds by Preventing Oppression with Educational Resources" (EMPOWER) is the collective voice of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County around the issue of educational reform. EMPOWER formed because race remained one of the main justice issues surrounding education in the county. The pastors of these churches came together following a School Board meeting in 2016 that began to name the academic challenges facing NCPS. An NCPS school official presented SOL data for a particular grade out of the 2015-2016 academic year. The official presented the requirements to maintain accreditation at all the schools. The official showed that in a particular grade 82% of white students and 80% of Hispanic students passed, noting the 75% pass rate needed for accreditation. The requirement to ensure accreditation for passing was for at least 65% of black students passing. This low requirement seemed achievable to those present at the meeting. The official continued his presentation and

[105] Alexander, 185.

reported that 56% of African-American students passed the SOL in that particular grade. The official reported that one of the schools was going to face an accreditation issue because of the performance of black students in a particular grade.

The results disappointed the members of the African-American community present at the meeting. To add to the pain, a parent of a white student asked a question about the performance of disabled students and economically disadvantaged students. The parent was attempting to move the conversation away from race as the factor and move towards economic or ableism factors as reasons for the accreditation issue. The school official noted that both disabled students and economically disadvantaged students in the same grade performed higher than African-American students did. The white student's parent could not grasp the official's response, leaving members of the African-American community feeling both powerless and helpless at that moment.

Later that week, the pastors of the ten African-American churches gathered and decided to form a collective body around educational reform. The pastors realized, out of that School Board meeting, that race was the central justice issue in education, and the implications of race were both present and absent in the conversation. On the one hand, race was present because the data pointed to race being a factor of challenge. On the other hand, race was absent as the white parent embodied the erasure of conversations on race as a factor. Several months before that School Board meeting, the Superintendent asked for black churches to have a greater presence in the educational system in Northumberland County. The churches responded and started coming to School Board meetings, including the one with the test scores and the accreditation issue revealed.

These churches historically competed with one another in drawing members of some churches towards other churches. Nevertheless, the churches banded together under the name EMPOWER. The churches realized that struggling or profiled students were not profiled by church affiliation but by race. However, churches changed their direction and banded together in naming the severity of the problem.

The churches began to realize their power and ability to create change. The Superintendent desired to see the achievement gap either diminish or disappear, and the churches had the power to create change. Whenever a pastor spoke at any public forum in Northumberland County, the county – meaning black and white residents and the elected officials – reverenced the black pastor's voice, as he or she represented the approximately 200 people in their congregation. EMPOWER came to understand this and realized that ten congregations coming together represented the voice of 2,000 African-American people in the county. Northumberland County's total population of 12,000 has a 25% African-American population; therefore, where there are approximately 3,000 African Americans in Northumberland County.[106] EMPOWER began to represent not just one voice or one church's voice of 200 people, but it began to represent two-thirds of the African-Americans in Northumberland County as one body.

EMPOWER began to mobilize congregations in making them aware of the challenges in the school system but were not able to expound on the problem. Several months after EMPOWER's formation, the Superintendent of NCPS was fired without just

[106] "2018 Northern Neck Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy."

cause during an emergency School Board meeting. Half of the EMPOWER pastors were present for the emergency meeting and left in awe by how the termination unfolded. EMPOWER began to show up as a body to School Board meetings out of concern that the issues facing African-American students were losing focus, as numerous EMPOWER pastors pointed to the Superintendent's advocacy for marginalized students as contributing to her removal. Most School Board meetings had an attendance of 30 – 50 people. On the meeting following the Superintendent's termination, EMPOWER brought 150 people to the meeting to protest the firing.

EMPOWER's mobilization gave people a voice to express their frustration and concern. EMPOWER focused on real information and trends to empower the students and their families. Though clergy made-up the leadership of EMPOWER, it was a voice for and representation of the entire community. Though the focus was on the performance of African-American students, EMPOWER advocated for all students. EMPOWER even began a pilot tutoring program around English Reading, though it did not last long. The challenge facing EMPOWER's tutoring effort was low attendance and sustainability regarding the tutoring. In addition, the parents' engagement slowed down after the Superintendent's firing did not present immediate changes. The parents retreated to the space of silence and EMPOWER struggled to gain further traction. Though the churches mobilized, they used historical methods of approaching race without considering the present contextual challenges that made these practices and efforts obsolete. The churches employed communal practices from a period when schools were integrating. The idea of racial disparity was foreign to many students, as black students grew up

around white students. The identification as a black student was not as pronounced until behavioral issues arose. This challenged black parents and students to recognize that a problem was present in their community, and many times, in their own homes.

Bringing the Contextual Pieces Together

The contextual analyses of practices, in the Black Baptist Church around education, point to a resolution to the BETH method's two areas of inquiry:

> First are those questions that focus on the *praxis* situation that is the crux of concern for the congregation…What are we doing? Why are we doing it?...Secondly are those questions which deal with the contextual locations – historical and contemporary – that influence existing *praxis*…Who are we?...Where are we?.[107]

This chapter analyzed contextual actions and conditions in time (historic and contemporaneous) and space (national and local). These analyses, individually, constitute the puzzle pieces that frame and shape local actions and conditions in Northumberland County. In addition, the case study contributes to answering the BETH method's two areas of inquiry.

The first area of inquiry is the *praxis* situation in which people seek to understand "what are we doing" and "why are we doing it." In this particular case, the inquiry points to two main conclusions. First, religious practices around education reform are ritualistic and not transformative. The statement "we have always done it this way" seeks to connect the actions of the churches' past generations with the churches' present generation. The idea of "if it worked for them, it could work for us" paralyzes the church

[107] Smith, 184.

in repeating the action, where the action itself is more important than the outcome. Therefore, the action is not transformative but maintains a ritualistic action, where a key example of this is how they approached tutoring. The case study shows tutoring done as a way to expand education through the church's work, but just having kids sit in a room and listen to another teach – as the practice in the past – is not necessarily transformative. These actions may include unintended consequences of maintaining the status quo and neglecting the liberating power of education.

Second, the religious practices for education reform in Northumberland County are reactive to episodic educational issues, where these practices neither actively nor entirely address the issues. The contemporary black church wrestles between societal acceptances for its work within the four walls and social change for its work outside the four walls. This wrestling causes the church, as noted in the case study, to remain stagnant or to address "fires" as they arise. This reactive approach is also present in "the preaching, the music, and the frenzy," where it only contemporizes one of these elements to shine a light on a social ill, with only the intent to shine a light.[108] It is wonderful to shine a light on an issue; it is another daunting task to walk closer to the issue and begin to analyze and solve it. The current black church practices reveal an unclear direction in solving the educational dilemma as their identity stands in question.

In the second area of inquiry, the understanding of "who are we" and "where are we" points to two main conclusions. First, the EMPOWER churches are fragmented. The

[108] DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 129.

fragmentation, though unified through EMPOWER, exists in the desire for individual advancement over communal growth. The data suggest that the disparities come not from church affiliation, but racial and ethnic background. However, many in the community historically have disregarded the issue of race and strived instead for individual advancement, at both the individual and church levels.

Second, EMPOWER churches live in blinded conditions. When local, contemporary Black Baptist churches historically saw educational data, they saw a conglomeration of data not split out into racial and gender-based data. This community could neither name nor quantify their challenges other than seeing rates of incarceration of African Americans due to its visibility in families. The experience of integrated housing and schools presents the misnomer that challenges either are not present or are present only in certain places. However, when the data divide by race and gender, it becomes clear that a problem is present and rampant throughout the community.

The excavation by the BETH method's multi-layered investigation begins to unlock the reality of both actions and identity in EMPOWER's churches surrounding educational justice. The desire for change is present, but the path to that change is not clear. A change in direction requires a transformation in how community leaders understand not only their role, but also their ability and power to create change. Northumberland County's status quo position lowers African Americans to a seemingly "second-class" citizenship. However, when African Americans begin to unlock their true potential – within the context – change will begin, and part of that change is a remembrance of heritage and legacy of the Black Baptist churches locally and nationally.

Chapter 4: Sankofa and Transformative Civility

The previous chapter described the context that shapes the climate of Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches. These conditions answer the "what are we doing" and "why are we doing it" inquiry by suggesting ritualistic and reactive practices. In addition, these conditions answer the "who are we" and "where are we" inquiry by describing the fragmented and blinded conditions. These contextual realities exacerbate the tensions between "other-worldly" concerns over "this-worldly" concerns with the rise of various religious movements, including but not limited to the prosperity gospel.[109] EMPOWER's work has these challenges, but the strategy to move forward and create transformation requires a deeper interrogation of practices.

The BETH Method's Mutual-Critical Conversation

The community's desire for change is not the concern, but rather the practices surrounding that change is the concern. A change in circumstance requires a change in practice for Black Baptist churches, but the change in practice requires introspection into those practices. The second movement of Smith's BETH method provides a tool to introspect practices surrounding educational justice within EMPOWER's churches. "The second stage of the BETH method involves generating a mutual-critical conversation between the assumptions, values, and meanings inherent in *praxis* with the normative texts of the black faith."[110] Smith's second stage places the belief system of black church

[109] The discussion around "prosperity gospel" in the 2000s is beyond the scope of this project. However, the impact is great in the use of language and practices that masked a reality for African Americans leading to greater challenges in the present decade, while not resolving social disparities.

[110] Smith, 185.

tradition in conversation with the normative texts of black church tradition. He names scripture and tradition as the normative texts of black church tradition.[111] Smith is honest that black church tradition – though rooted in Articles of Faith in the Baptist tradition – does not seek the doctrinal documents in guidance.[112] Smith draws from Browning but particularizes the method around black church tradition.

Smith's method draws from and closely follows Don Browning's mutual critical conversation in *A Fundamental Practical Theology*. Browning situates his method, which he names as historical theology, around a question reflecting upon normative texts. "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?... [It is part of] a larger hermeneutic effort to understand our praxis and the theory behind it."[113] Browning challenges the role of normative texts upon *praxis* while naming "effective history" as part of that interrogation. Browning draws on Hans-Georg Gadamer's work *Truth and Method Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1982) in defining effective history. Effective history emphasizes the role of "events of the past shap[ing] present historical consciousness…a fusion of the whole of the past with the present."[114] Smith particularizes Browning's method to place methodological emphasis on black church tradition in a twofold way. First, Smith acknowledges prioritizing scripture and tradition

[111] Smith, 185.

[112] Ibid., 187.

[113] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 48-9, Kindle.

[114] Ibid., 40.

as the normative texts of black church traditions. Second, he captures the historical nuances of the African-American experience that would be lost in other methods: an elevation of experience as a theological source and an emphasis on effective history.

The mutual critical conversation is between the contextual analysis and the normative texts, a focus on two questions to determine the *praxis* in the context. The first question asks, "What do normative texts of black faith have to say about the assumptions, values, and meanings that have been uncovered in the investigation into *praxis* situations and their contexts?"[115] The second question asks, "What do the assumptions, values, and meanings have to say about the normative texts of black faith?"[116] These questions challenge how normative texts inform contextual reality around *praxis* – the contextual analysis' assumptions, values, and meanings – and how the contextual analysis informs normative texts around *praxis*. Contextual analysis and normative texts equally inform *praxis*, suggesting their mutual criticality in the conversation.

This project will use Smith's mutual critical conversation in reconsidering the *praxis* of EMPOWER, an opportunity for transformation. The particularization of Smith's method around Northumberland County draws upon Gadamer's "effective history." This project will interpret "effective history" through the lens of Sankofa. Sankofa draws from the Twi language and Akan religion in Ghana. The symbol is a bird with its body pointing forward and head pointed backward, while depositing an egg on its back. The word Sankofa means "go back and get," and the egg is the focus of the symbol.

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[115] Smith, 186.

[116] Ibid.

The bird represents a cultural body that is moving forward. While it moves forward, it brings elements of the past – the egg – into the present. The bird deposits the elements of the past onto the present body, while the body is moving forward into the future.

The Sankofa bird depicts Gadamer's "effective history" through the lens of black church tradition. The Sankofa bird is depositing the past into the contemporary local context. The introspection on *praxis* will use Smith's mutual-critical conversation to reflect upon present challenges as a contextual analysis: the multi-layered investigation. The chapter will analyze the deeper implications of the tension between the historic local Black Baptist churches and EMPOWER on practices of educational reform by analyzing two prominent, theological figures. The analysis will lead to a conversation between the normative texts with the contextual analysis of these figures in understanding *praxis*. The discussion on the work and tension of Black Baptist churches will move towards a brief case study of a group that formed in Northumberland County. The chapter will conclude with a reassessment of *praxis* and an expansion of practices through transformative civility for moving this group forward: the aim of the Sankofa bird.

The Dialectical Tensions of the Black Church

The black church, from its nuanced history, lives in numerous dialectical tensions. Lincoln and Mamiya profile six dialectical tensions. Due to the project scope, this chapter will describe two of these tensions: "other-worldly versus this-worldly" and "priestly versus prophetic functions." The tension within black church traditions around these areas is dialectic and not bifurcated because black church tradition does not exist in a bifurcated tension of being either other-worldly or this-worldly, but rather the black

church exists in a dialectical tension, fighting for attention between being both other-worldly and this-worldly. Lincoln and Mamiya define other-worldly as "being concerned only with heaven and eternal life or the world beyond, a pie-in-the-sky attitude that neglects political and social concerns." In contrast, Lincoln and Mamiya define this-worldly as "involvement in the affairs of this world, especially politics and social life, in the here and now."[117] EMPOWER lives in this dialectical tension.

Most of the congregations have an expressed other-worldly focus with some space allotted for this-worldly acts of worship. The other-worldly actions in the worship space focus on efforts tied to salvation – individual over communal – and what the individual does to worship and achieve God's promises for that individual, a product of Prosperity Gospel in the 2000s. The "this-worldly" actions contributed to "other-worldly" preaching and practices as pepper sprinkled onto the service to ensure a mandated outward action, though not often actually enacted. The peppering of justice issues comes as part of the sermon to invigorate the congregation or to acknowledge a local or national pressing news report, leaving it as just conversation. Regarding educational justice, the emphatic "we must do something for the kids" surrounded both other-worldly and this-worldly practices for moral examples and uplift efforts, respectively. However, the churches' actual response to address these issues remained anesthetized due to the dialectic tension surrounding the function of the church.

The struggle to create lasting change in EMPOWER draws partly from the other-

[117] Lincoln, 12.

worldly versus this-worldly dialectic tension, but more from the dialectic tension between priestly versus prophetic functions of the church.

> Priestly functions involve only those activities concerned with worship and maintain the spiritual life of members; church maintenance activities are the major thrust. Prophetic functions refer to involvement in political concerns and activities in the wider community; classically, prophetic activity has meant pronouncing a radical word of God's judgment.[118]

This distinction partly parallels the other-worldly versus this-worldly dialectic tension, but the functions of the church are a missional assessment, where attention points more to the role of clergy in the actions. The dialectic tension says both are present, but the challenge is which is more dominant and for what reason.

The priestly function of the black church continues to focus on caring for people's needs. However, the EMPOWER churches employ the priestly functions to maintain institutions and to ensure social conditions do not worsen that were already bad or poor for its parishioners. Regarding educational justice, the Black Baptist churches had not attempted to address educational reform, as they did not want to create a more hostile environment for the students of color in a predominately-white institution. Therefore, the churches were silent in the county's public meetings around educational justice before EMPOWER. Their silence in public meetings maintained the status quo world; however, the volume of the roar in the church's worship space, seeking ways to change this system, matched the volume of their silence. This environment presented a mixed message to the congregation and the community, where conversations around justice could not find a

[118] Lincoln, 12.

voice in the space of the oppressor. This mixed message between the priestly and prophetic functions of the church finds its roots in the historic black church through its historic leadership, the egg the Sankofa bird posited in the future.

The Priestly vs. Prophetic Tensions in Black Church Leadership

The tension of contemporary black churches comes out of the tension experienced by religious leaders in the historic black church. A critical period from this era that shaped the leadership of the contemporary black church was the year 1963. In *Black Religious Leaders: Conflict in Unity*, Peter Paris suggests that there are four typologies of black religious leadership present in 1963 that defines the span of ideologies in the black church tradition: priestly, prophetic, political, and nationalist. He presents particular leaders as a way of classifying and describing these typologies: Joseph Jackson (priestly figure), Martin Luther King, Jr. (prophetic figure), Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (political figure), and Malcolm X (nationalist figure). Paris does not present these typologies as isolated characterizations, but rather suggests that the typologies exist in all black religious leaders, where the dominance of one typology creates the subordination of another typology. Two critical typologies and figures exemplify reflecting on Northumberland County's context: Jackson (priestly figure) and King (prophetic figure).

Jackson and King represent the dynamic clash of personalities and ideologies within the Black Baptist Church that lingers as the tension between the priestly and prophetic typologies around educational reform. The year 1963 was within a contentious period regarding school integration, as described in the previous chapter. The effort towards school reform – namely boycotting schools – was a point of contention between

these two figures and ultimately, the differing typologies. Jackson served as the President National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBCUSA) during this time, while King had recently finished his tenure as pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama and maintained his role as a prominent leader in the modern Civil Rights movement. Introspecting these figures and typologies gives clarity to what underlies the efforts and intentions, and this comes out of a mutual-critical conversation.

The mutual-critical conversation between these typologies is how their ideologies on educational reform and their theological and political ideologies inform one another. First, the discussion briefly will dissect each leader's position on educational reform around racial equality and then the leader's theological and political ideologies. The dissection will examine the influence of each upon one another and then develop a comparative argument on Black Baptist churches around the mutual-critical conversation.

Joseph Jackson – The Priestly Typology

Jackson is a historic religious leader in the Black Baptist church embodying the priestly typology. Jackson served as pastor of the Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois and as President of the NBCUSA. Jackson's position on various social issues pointed the church away from outward action, but focused on worship practices, an embodied priestly typology. This ideology gives greater clarity into his position on education reform, and namely, the priestly typology for the Black Baptist church.

Jackson on education reform

Jackson's ideology surrounding educational reform focused on maintaining opportunities for African Americans given by white society and not jeopardizing those

opportunities through protests. Paris points to this ideology being central to Jackson's approach towards integration. "Integration must not be used as a tool for punishing others for past sins, which, [Jackson] contended, had been an unfortunate element in its implementation vis-à-vis schools."[119] Jackson positioned the children to be appreciative for what they possessed without further disrespect of the system. "[Jackson felt] children should be encouraged to go to school and to respect their teachers…the inculcation of negative values could render a death blow to their entire educational careers; this would be a tragedy,"[120] suggests Paris. Jackson valued the progress made by African Americans surrounding education, namely the Brown v. Board decision. He saw that as a starting point of entry point towards equality; therefore, he did not want to disrupt the progress made. Jackson pointed African-American families to appreciate the progress with an optimistic attitude. "[Jackson saw] the responsibility all adults have to children is to enable them to embody positive values toward their teachers, administrators, and education, rather than negative ones,"[121] asserts Paris. Jackson realized negative attitudes existed towards African-American children in the newly integrated schools. Rather than boycott the schools, Jackson pointed African Americans towards embodying a spirit of following the wave in the hope of one day seeing an equal society.

[119] Peter Paris, *Black Religious Leaders: Conflict in Unity* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 93.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

Jackson's theological and political ideologies

Jackson's theological and political ideologies emphasize a sense of unity, where notions of love and a common brotherhood/sisterhood are essential to the Christian faith. This unity, both in and out of the Christian faith, focused on salvation as the aim of the church and unity.[122] Paris asserts, "[Jackson] sought genuine harmony among diverse groups without destroying the diversity. However, the purpose of the unity would be the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of souls, and the form of the unity would be the fellowship produced by those working for a common goal."[123] Jackson viewed the church's role as a unifying agent to bring humanity together here on Earth – despite differences – to accomplish a common purpose: salvation.

Jackson's focus on salvation focused more on the parishioners' spiritual lives existing in unity with white America than the parishioners' physical lives living equally with white America. His theological belief in unity resonates in his political ideology in the relationship between the community and that nation. Paris draws from Jackson's 1968 speech as the NBCUSA's Annual Session, where Paris suggests, "Characteristically, Jackson spoke about the proper relationship that should exist between citizens and the nation, calling for cooperation among all groups in the nation, rather than competition, for goodwill and mutual respect rather than bitterness and strife."[124] Jackson saw the need for African-American Christians to take a secondary role in the competition by allowing

[122] Paris, 71.

[123] Ibid., 70.

[124] Ibid., 86

white Americans to have the primary space. Jackson's political ideology of cooperation removes the emphasis on addressing race directly in the African-American community. Jackson opposed both the Black Power and black theology movements by viewing them as divisive. Jackson asserts, "What we say against white segregationists by the gospel of Christ we must also say against members of our race who insist on interpreting the gospel of Christ on a strictly anti-white and pro-black foundation."[125] Jackson's theological and political ideology viewed the path to solving the ills of humanity is through love that does not divide but unifies, an approach that silences race in the conversation.

The mutual-critical conversation of the priestly typology

Jackson's ideology around educational reform and ideology around theology and politics – a representation of the priestly typology – point to a sustainable environment that does not desire disruption as long as the oppressive environment gives something to the oppressed. Jackson's ideology around theology and politics inform his ideology around educational reform due to the spirit of unity being needed and present. Jackson's sense of unity subtly mandated one to compromise something to maintain unity; the compromise became the voice. The public silence of the priestly typology, from the theological and political ideology, points African Americans to accept what is given to them and show gratitude. This sentiment is the silence experienced in Northumberland County in the contemporary Black Baptist churches. The desire not to upset the status quo for fear of losing what little the community possesses. This sense of gratitude and

[125] Paris, 69.

appreciation for what white society gives them, as an ideology around educational reform, informs Jackson's theological and political ideology. The cycle of appreciation is a representation of love and unity. Unity aims to ensure all parties present are happy, at least in the outward presentation to the other. However, happiness in silence is not actual happiness, but rather a silent compromise without contention. Jackson's intentions point to improving the community incrementally to achieve equality at some point.

Martin Luther King, Jr. – The Prophetic Typology

King is a historic religious leader in the Black Baptist church embodying the prophetic typology. King served as pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, work was a leader in the modern Civil Rights movement, and guided major civil rights legislation. King's position, on various social issues, pointed the church towards outward action, an embodied a prophetic typology. This ideology gives greater clarity into his position on education reform, and namely, the prophetic typology for the Black Baptist church.

King on education reform

King's ideology on educational reform focused on all citizens protesting unjust systems. Paris surmises King's approach to educational reform as not focusing on individuals causing oppression, but rather on systems that cause oppression. The systems of oppression require the entire voice of the oppressed to speak up. King is adamant that "nobody, including children, should be encouraged to cooperate with evil."[126] Therefore,

[126] Paris, 122.

King viewed educational reform as a moral struggle in which children should participate.[127] The individual's freedom came out of the individual's efforts. King's perspective on educational reform as a moral issue points to King viewing the educational disparities as a justice issue. King recognized the anger that African Americans possessed because of this injustice. However, King aimed to direct that anger to a place of finding voice rather than finding violence. Paris emphasizes King's desire to redirect potentially destructive anger towards constructive actions. Paris surmises, "The youth know that the black and the poor live in a cruelly unjust society. If their anger is not channeled positively, it will explode in the form of violence. But if they are committed to the use of nonviolence, they will aim their attack against injustice and not against the lives of the persons who are their fellow citizens."[128] This non-violent method is core to King's ideology. It was the non-violent protest around educational reform, where the citizens, on all levels, would participate and seek justice: a moral issue.

King's theological and political ideologies

King's theological and political ideologies emphasize the role of the religious person and institution to guide those blinded by their greed and sin towards a place of change and redemption, where the blinded one is the oppressor. Redemptive suffering contributed to this ideology; however, King's ideology roots itself in his upbringing in Atlanta, Georgia out of a deep Biblical tradition through the Christian lens. This upbringing grounded King in seeing the interconnectedness of humanity throughout the

[127] Paris, 122.

[128] Ibid., 123.

world, a connectedness that extended beyond boundaries built by humanity. Paris points to King viewing the interconnectedness as a kinship of humanity with God as Parent.[129] The centrality of God's connection with humanity is God "relat[ing] to persons in love and grace in the midst of immediate experience."[130] King viewed God creating justice in those immediate experiences through God's love and grace through humanity.

King saw the church's role in creating space for social change, responding to a theological mandate for justice through human interconnectedness. King suggests:

> The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state…if the church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace and for economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of millions and cause [people] everywhere to say that it has atrophied its will.[131]

King calls for the church to reaffirm its mandate for justice and its allegiance to respecting the personhood of its parishioners. He calls out the church to be the place where transformation happens in moving people away from injustice – an act against God's love – and towards justice. Paris affirms, "In King's opinion, it is neither the material nature nor the spiritual nature that causes one to sin against God, but rather one's will, which is the center of one's being and the agency by which choices are made."[132] The struggle to act in a just way falls on the individual's decision influenced by environment. However, King points out that people cannot stand by idly as injustice

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[129] Paris, 112.

[130] Ibid., 102

[131] Ibid., 117.

[132] Ibid., 107.

happens. The power of the one who speaks out by God leading them is what Paris shows as the space of change. "King could speak of the righteousness of the nonconformist who was imbued with the spirit of God…King made it amply clear that the gospel of Christianity is one that seeks social change religiously and morally."[133] King points to the need to disrupt the status quo as led by God to create a fair and just social condition. King's theological and political ideology viewed the path to solving the ills of humanity by addressing the oppression through love and creating a new approach to unity.

The mutual-critical conversation of the prophetic typology

King's ideology around educational reform and theology and politics points to a need to disrupt environments to ensure justice is present in a sustaining environment. King's ideology around theology and politics inform his ideology around educational reform due to the need to speak up out of a moral obligation as a conduit for justice. In addition, it shapes educational reform to be a moral issue and not a simple social challenge. Furthermore, it pushes the church to speak up for justice even when it is unpopular or dangerous: the nonconformist. Moreover, the push for change in educational reform – out of King's theological and political ideology – also infuses the work to reach all people within a society. King emphasizes the kinship and interconnectedness of humanity in his theological and political ideology. This relationship informs his ideology around educational reform to view the children as necessary components in the fight for justice and not as objects of the quest for justice.

[133] Paris, 116.

As the theological and political ideology informs the ideology of educational reform, the ideology on educational reform informs the theological and political ideology, namely around defining the moral problem. Reducing educational reform to a social issue without a moral problem becomes easy until one realizes the long-term impact of educational disparities. The quest for educational justice deeply informs King's theological and political ideology of interconnectedness. The quest challenges people's claim to love and worship the same God equally on the theological level while being unwilling to give to one another equally on the social level. Reducing educational reform to a simple social issue bypasses the innate humanity of all involved and rejects the equality of creation: a critical issue in King's thought and work. King's intentions point to improving the community to achieve equality.

The Tension and Conflict in Dysfunctional Civility

The typologies that Paris presents represent a dominant style of leadership within each of the leaders. The priestly typology is dominant in Jackson's style of leadership; therefore, Jackson's leadership style exhibits a dominance of the priestly typology over the prophetic typology. The prophetic typology is dominant in King's style of leadership; therefore, King's leadership style exhibits a dominance of the prophetic typology over the priestly typology. This assessment suggests that Jackson possessed a prophetic approach to addressing educational reform and King possessed a priestly approach to addressing educational reform; however, the dominant typology is their legacy. The tension between the typologies created tension between the two leaders.

Before 1963, the two leaders confronted their positions of power in the

NBCUSA's 1960 election. Jackson feared King's rise to prominence and King, along with several other leaders, sought to unseat Jackson from his leadership position due to what many saw as a complacent attitude. The election leads to Jackson staying in power while creating a division in the denomination: the creation of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. (PNBC).[134] The division between the leaders created division among the congregations. On the one hand, many congregations desired to follow the priestly-dominant typology to address issues of race through slow incremental change while not jeopardizing what they possessed. On the other hand, many congregations desired to follow the prophetic-dominant typology to address issues of race through nonviolent protest to have what they did not possess but desired. This sentiment was a prominent issue in Northumberland County's contemporary Black Baptist churches. The struggles between the typologies challenged how to address educational reform. It was a battle between churches that were comfortable in not upsetting white citizens and churches that wanted to change regardless of who would become upset. This clash led to churches retreating to their worship houses to reflect on the challenges with inaction. The dialectic and often-divisive interpretations of these typologies create internal dysfunction within the congregations and community.

A community possessing non-negotiated, divergent ways towards a similar goal can create spaces of dysfunctional civility. Walter Fluker defines dysfunctional civility as a "cycle of behavior happening when an organization begins with individual and private

[134] "National Baptist Convention," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University, 2019, accessed January 12, 2019, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/national-baptist-convention-nbc.

agreement about what is wrong and what steps should be made to correct the problem or situation, but members of the group fail to honestly communicate their desires and beliefs to one another."[135] Fluker points to the divergent paths coming out of individual agendas or egos as the problem. Many people in black churches and communities see their ability to assimilate – finding their liberation – as greater than liberating the entire community. They aim to demonstrate what Higginbotham names as civility. "[Civility was] behavior in public [that] would earn [African-American] people a measure of esteem from white America, and hence [African Americans] strove to win the black lower class' psychological allegiance to temperance, industriousness, thrift, refined manners, and Victorian sexual morals."[136] Education was a form of civilizing the African-American community, where the civilizing act was assimilation into white society to have equality. African Americans became more knowledgeable out of this education, as noted in the previous chapter, but the education gained divided not only black communities, but also black churches in seeing how far the resistance would go to ensure equality in education.

Fluker's definition of dysfunctional civility centers on identifying the problem in a society: educational disparities for African-American students through Jackson and King. However, Fluker's definition encompasses the Jackson and King situation because the divergent typologies do not find synergy but amplify their voices. Like a family that does not speak to one another, Jackson and King begin to divide a community, where the need is to come together. The emphasis on the leadership style rather than on the social

[135] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1601.

[136] Higginbotham, 14.

challenge creates this dysfunctional civility.[137] Addressing this leadership style requires a diversion from individual objectives to the communal need within the social challenge.

This shift requires a leadership style that names and focuses on the communal social challenges. Though educational reform has centered this conversation, Paris points to the common theme among all the leaders and the issues being race and racism. "Racism is described variously that those diverse descriptions imply their own respective policies."[138] The approach to resolving racism, in both experienced and codified forms, differs out of the experience and law created around it. Paris points to racism's pluralism requiring a pluralistic approach for resolution. "Since its perspective limits each of the understandings of racism, it is clear that the problem of racism is not adequately defined by any one conception, and therefore, no one form of action adequately resolves it."[139] A pluralistic response requires the divergent communities to find synergy in their diverse perspectives and synergy around the problem itself: racism's pronounced presence. This synergy and dysfunction undergird EMPOWER's formation.

A Deeper Reflection on the EMPOWER Case Study

EMPOWER found unity around the issue of race in educational reform even though their various particular churches had divergent agendas in other areas. EMPOWER's mobilization centered on episodic events that created an emerging prophetic-dominant typology. However, as the momentary, communal fire withered, a

[137] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1604.

[138] Paris, 251.

[139] Ibid., 279.

more priestly-dominant typology returned. The advocacy energy exhausted the parishioners of many of the churches. EMPOWER saw a continual cycle of swinging from a priestly-dominant typology, to a more dominant prophetic typology, and then back to a priestly-dominant typology. This re-emergence of the priestly-dominant typology presented an upsurge also in dysfunctional civility, as congregations regressed to a focus narrowed to their local congregations with less concern about the broader community. In addition, the re-emergence of the priestly-dominant typology developed from a newer and greater fear of lost than was present in previous years. The parents felt helpless as many employers in the region subtly threatened to fire people who spoke up on education and sided with EMPOWER. The question EMPOWER wrestled and wrestles with is how to create a more balanced environment around the typologies for the Black Baptist churches and members of the community in Northumberland County in efforts to address the educational disparities disproportionately affecting African-American students?

Transformative Civility

The tradition passed down to EMPOWER from the historic black church, in both strengths and weaknesses, represents Sankofa. The bird in the present (contemporary black church) posits the egg of the past (historic black church) on its back as it moves forward into the future. However, the Sankofa bird in the real world can understand, assess, and critique the passed-down egg in rethinking and reconsidering how to live into the actions of past generations while considering the nuances of the present. The mutual-critical conversations of the priestly and prophetic typologies elucidate the challenges present in the black church and begin to unpack the challenges faced by EMPOWER.

EMPOWER's approach was innovative and obsolete at the same time.

On the one hand, the approach was innovative for the contemporary space due to churches – rooted in the past few decades on competition – finding a synergy that amazed the community, including the School Board. Many thought the churches coming together would silence and placate the community due to a local and national history of black churches suppressing the voice of the oppressed to avoid disrupting the status quo. However, when they appeared at the School Board meeting ready to express their outrage constructively, the system heard their voice. On the other hand, the approach was obsolete for the contemporary space due to churches attempting to approach the problem in a manner like the historic black church. The ways once used either not as effective or not effective at all in comparison to previous generations in the same context. The dysfunction existed in the tension between the contexts and approached differing between the historic and contemporary Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County.

The reflection, from the mutual-critical conversation, reveals the thinking and practices of EMPOWER's churches require a shift. Albert Einstein affirms, "Past thinking and methods did not prevent world wars. Future thinking must prevent wars…The old type of thinking can raise a thousand objections of realism against this simplicity. However, such thought ignores the psychological realities."[140] Einstein offers the reality that a society cannot use the ways of thinking at the creation of problems to solve those problems today: times change as do contexts and approaches. However,

[140] Michael Amrine, "The Real Problem Is in the Hearts of Men," *New York Times*, June 23, 1946, accessed January 13, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/1946/06/23/archives/the-real-problem-is-in-the-hearts-of-men-professor-einstein-says-a.html

EMPOWER has accomplished something novel: the awakening of the black church. Fluker suggests, "Waking the dead in black churches in the United States will mean bringing to the fore of our collective consciousness the possibility that we can claim agency and responsibility for our own lives, especially for the future of our youth."[141] These churches began the effort to mobilize the congregational and communal human agency, but it remained episodic based on occurrences of collective frustration. I name collective frustration as frustration that went beyond the black community, where white citizens also expressed outrage. Without white outrage, there was no black voice on community matters, except through the voice of the Black Baptist churches.

The shift in this thinking requires a fusion and balance between the priestly and prophetic typologies. Many scholars – viewing the autopsy of what they think is the black church – point to a need to dismiss and dismantle old frameworks. However, I suggest a rethinking of how the Black Baptist churches negotiate the typologies with a focus on its strengths, while awakening the blindness of its weaknesses. On the one hand, the priestly typology's strength is in its ability to exist under the radar. Those who are dominant in the priestly typology will not upset the status quo and will do actions that are both expected and demanded. On the other hand, the prophetic typology's strength is its presence in advocacy and the unpredictability of its actions in upsetting the status quo. These two approaches sound paradoxical, but when rethought the two can fuse.

The rethinking of the leadership model for EMPOWER comes out of King's

[141] Fluker, *The Ground Has Shifted*, 224-5.

sermon "Transformed Nonconformist," a sermon based on Romans 12:2. Fluker draws from King's work in identifying this as a style of leadership. "The *transformed nonconformist* is primarily concerned with the disruption of 'negative peace' as a way of bringing to surface hidden tensions that create the conditions for creative understanding and new discursive possibilities."[142] Fluker names this as transformative civility, out of King's work, to resolve the dysfunctional civility of congregations and community. Fluker explains the role of intellectuals in society to unpack transformative civility and its synonymous term subversive civility. "Intellectuals contribute to a democratic life when they civilize political contestation and when they subvert complacent consensus," Fluker suggests.[143] Fluker's definition points to the strengths in the priestly and prophetic typologies fused into transformative civility. On the one hand, it presents a community with a civil approach to address the present issues. On the other hand, it presents a community with a subversive approach to awaken them to their reality and create an urgency for change. The fusion of these two comes through transformative civility as a form of practical theological leadership for EMPOWER.

Transformative Civility as Practical Theological Leadership

Transformative civility becomes a style of practical theological leadership for EMPOWER, first by understanding how it is a form of leadership. I name it as a style of leadership out of the James Burns' classic definition. Burns defines leadership occurring "when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict

[142] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1331.

[143] Ibid., location 1327.

with others, institutional, political-psychological, and other resources to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers."[144] Leadership attunes the leaders to the followers' motives and needs by engaging the leader's visions with actions that stimulate the followers. Transformative civility, first, can be a form of leadership in which the leader gives guidance and direction for the people, moves the needle away from the ego of the pastors in EMPOWER and points it towards the parents and students.

Transformative civility as a form of practical theological leadership attempts to guide the parents and students to a new way of living by understanding the needs that motivate the parents and students. In the process of transforming/subverting and civilizing, the leadership style awakens the community. However, as Burns suggests, "The challenge of mobilizing and harnessing insurgent motivation and pitting them against established power – of transforming the situation – falls on leadership."[145] EMPOWER has the capacity not only to mobilize but also to harness the community's energy to create the transformation through leadership. The transformation in access to education is what the parents and students desire, and the work of congregations within EMPOWER to aid that effort is the crux of the problem in this project. The desire for equitable access to education and outcomes motivates the parents and students. Kevin Gaines surmises, "The democratic aspirations of the freed persons for universal education for citizenship, political leadership, and social advancement were challenged by the

[144] James Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1978), 18.

[145] James Burns, *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003), 198.

program and philosophy of normal school education."[146] Gaines' critique of educational justice points to classism and internal racism with the African-American context.

However, transformative civility, as a form of leadership, addresses the individual and communal values around education and uplift. Burns offers:

> Public values such as liberty, justice, equality, happiness that have endured, flourished, and evolved over centuries, that rebased in human wants and needs, that dominate people's hopes and fears and expectation, that deeply influence their social and political attitudes and shape much of their day-to-day behavior – ultimately such values have a huge causal effect.[147]

The causal effects from educational justice include economic access, incarceration rates, and ultimately social uplift and advancement. These are the values Burns names as being public that become the intersecting motivation of EMPOWER as a leader and ultimately the parents and students and followers – out of Burns' definition of leadership – that drives both in a common direction.

The values present (a moral issue) surround equal access to education: educational justice. Transformative civility is a style of practical theological leadership as it reimagines religious practice to address the moral issue present in society. I name it a style of leadership that is theological not because it focuses in and on the church, but rather because educational reform and equality is a moral issue, drawing from King's sentiment. It is a space of public access where human law has made it equal, but humans have made it unequal because of how God created people. Therefore, transformative

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[146] Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 32.

[147] Burns, *Transforming Leadership*, 205-6.

civility – focused on empowering the lives of congregation and communities around a moral issue – can serve a style of practical theological leadership.

Transformative civility actualizes itself as a type of practical theological leadership in the process of reflecting on religious practices that engage in educational reforms for EMPOWER. Fluker presents transformative civility in several works but does not expand its meaning beyond a reflection on King's life. Transformative civility, as a style of practical theological leadership, is more than a simple realignment of the priestly and prophetic typologies, where this would be an insufficient definition in putting flesh to transformative civility. The typologies bring with them a memory of practices indelibly etched that force congregations to operate out of ritual rather than out of a contextual discernment. In addition, the typologies present the reason for the presumed demise of the black church. Therefore, transformative civility must accomplish both tasks Fluker names and carry on the several elements of the typologies. I suggest that the transformation and contemporization of transformative civility in EMPOWER, as a type of practical theological leadership, moves away from a consideration of priestly and prophetic typologies towards a reflective process having two components: *phronēsis* that leads to conscientization: a need for practical wisdom that leads to critical consciousness. The remainder of this chapter will unpack these two complementary components before operationalizing them into the community in the next chapter.

Phronēsis in Transformative Civility

The first component of transformative civility is *phronēsis.* In *A Fundamental Practical Theology,* Don Browning draws from Gadamer's use of the Aristotelian term –

phronēsis – to describe reflective practical wisdom. Browning suggests, "[*Phronēsis* is] practical wisdom that reflects a concern to do or act in accordance to what should be done within particular contextual realities."[148] *Phronēsis* is practical wisdom in action by a constant reflection upon context and normative texts in conversation with one another: a mutual-critical conversation. This use of practical wisdom leaves a congregation and community asking practical questions of mobilized wisdom that Browning extracts: "'What should we do?' and 'how should we live?'"[149] These questions within transformative civility point to practices of liberation within civility. However, we must consider how accessible liberation is within a contextual reality.

A use of *phronēsis* within the African-American context requires some rethinking for transformative civility; else, it will be a tool of oppression leaving congregations and communities in their present situation. Smith critiques Browning's use of *phronēsis* around access, class, and power. Smith explains:

> The context from which the word praxis and *phronēsis* arose was in the Greek city-states where Aristotle was concerned to understand the kind of action required to achieve the highest of Greek vocations, or the best possible life. This highest good, *eudaimonia*, was the life of good political leadership and was achieved through praxis or phronēsis. *Phronēsis* in this sense is practical wisdom that informs action; in this case, [an] action that leads to *eudaimonia*.[150]

Smith re-contextualizes the use of *phronēsis* in a way that situates the Aristotelian idea around power and the quest for "the good," e*udaimonia*. However, Smith problematizes

[148] Smith, 102.

[149] Browning, 10.

[150] Smith, 55.

the use of both *phronēsis* and *eudaimonia* when he affirms, *"Eudaimonia* was only something that could be pursued by Greek, free, aristocratic males. Women, slaves, indentured persons, people of color, or non-Greeks were excluded from the political process and hence from participation in the greatest good."[151] Smith does not suggest that the only outcome or concern of *phronēsis* is e*udaimonia,* but that access to that goal of pursuing "the good" was limited to some groups. Smith challenges Browning's failure "to address how his use of Aristotelian *phronēsis* addresses such an exclusivist nature."[152] Smith pushes for inclusivity for marginalized communities.

Smith expands Browning limited scope of *phronēsis* to become more inclusive through what Smith calls *black phronēsis* out of an African-American e*udaimonia*. Smith defines an African-American e*udaimonia* as a "good" representing liberation, as a theological action, from inequities from the period of slavery to the present day.[153] Smith's allusion to past, present, and future points to the Sankofa bird. The timeless search for liberation as a theological issue and Smith pointing to an African-American e*udaimonia* expand the definition of e*udaimonia* and, ultimately, expand Aristotle's *phronēsis* to be a *black phronēsis.* This approach of *phronēsis* "becomes a valuable theological resource which can be used in the creation and maintenance of an informed *praxis* for the African American church," affirms Smith.[154] Without Smith's critique,

[151] Smith, 55.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid., 61.

[154] Ibid.

using Browning's *phronēsis* in marginalized spaces would be anachronistic. Browning's analysis and Smith's critique of that analysis inform the understanding of *phronēsis* (practical wisdom) as a component of transformative civility for marginalized communities, namely Black Baptist churches.

This analysis is the first component of transformative civility because it creates an informed practice for EMPOWER out of the "what should we do" and "how should we live" question regarding educational reform through theological practice. An informed practice creates transformative civility because it is both transformative/subversive and civil. An informed practice is civil because it creates order and structure regarding the churches' ecclesial practices and is transformative/subversive because it informs the congregations on the totality of the practice. It moves beyond ritualistic actions towards the liberating intent undergirding practices. *Phronēsis* pushes the priestly and prophetic typologies into a fused space. The outcome of test scores and the government's slow action to resolve the achievement gap intentionally points to second-class citizenship. *Phronēsis* addresses both the civil and transformative/subversive actions of the practical theological leadership model by creating constructive practices while pointing the congregations and community to seek liberation and aim for first-class citizenship.

The first step in this process is the ability to name the aim. It points the families to see their lives through "what should we do" and "how should we live" to be the same access level as their white friends, coworkers, and community members. This sentiment presents a counternarrative to "what we have done" and "how we have lived." It reopens the presence of hope in and through the work of the Black Baptist churches. *Phronēsis* re-

informs the practice of advocacy for self, family, and community and the demand for justice and equality through the work of clergy in EMPOWER. In addition, it points the church to reclaim the intent of the egg on the back of the Sankofa bird through re-contextualizing the egg's intent, being liberation: the *eudaimonia*. The civility within transformative civility, for EMPOWER, must point towards a higher sense of living and action that aims towards justice and not complacency. The practices out of this rethinking must reclaim the congregation and community's human agency. EMPOWER must retool the approach to capture the first component of transformative civility: *phronēsis*.

Conscientization in Transformative Civility

The second component of transformative civility is conscientization, as it draws from *phronēsis*: the first component. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Paulo Freire details the education and empowerment of oppressed people come by moving the power of the learning experience away from the teacher and giving it to the student, representing the oppressed. This transfer of power places the power of learning and enacting into the hands of the oppressed. This power dynamic begins with what Freire calls conscientization. It is "the awakening of critical consciousness that leads the way to the expression of social discontents, precisely because these discontents are real components of an oppressive situation."[155] Freire's definition includes the necessity for critical consciousness, where Freire calls this a status reached when the oppressed recognize the reality of their oppression.[156] Freire calls for this awakening of an oppressed people for

[155] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 36.

[156] Ibid., 174.

them to acknowledge their oppression. After the awakening, the ability to educate them for their liberation exists; however, the oppressed people must own the education for education to liberate. Freire's work points to a reality that people not only must participate in the tools of their liberation, but also must own the tools of their liberation.

This approach is the second component of transformative civility because it creates the awakening of the EMPOWER churches to realize their oppression. The challenge with EMPOWER churches, as Fluker notes in *The Ground Has Shifted,* is the churches' mood of numbness and anesthetization to their reality. If someone lives in oppression and does not realize that oppression, the tools – given to them for their freedom – will appear to be demeaning, dehumanizing, or condescending. Why would they need tools for freedom if they view themselves as free? Freire's approach awakens the oppressed to realize their oppression. The action of awakening creates transformative civility because it is both civil and transformative/subversive. The action of awakening is civil because it creates an awareness of self in a society where people are accountable for their actions. However, the action of awakening is transformative/subversive, in combination with *phronēsis*, because it not only gives the awareness of the need for the change but also pushes the people to act for change. In addition, the action of awakening opens the path for EMPOWER to awaken the congregations and community in a newly realized way of liberation. The application of Freire's critical consciousness is transformational, but it is also subversive in its ability to take place without others noticing and subtly changes the advocacy landscape in an expedited way when applied in a conducive manner. EMPOWER must retool the approach to capture the second

component of transformative civility: conscientization.

Pulling the Pieces Together for Transformative Civility

Smith's interpretation of *phronēsis* and Freire's interpretation of conscientization are critical, complementary components of transformative civility as a type of practical theological leadership. The necessary elements, from Fluker's definition, require the practical theological leadership model to "civilize political contestation and…subvert complacent consensus."[157] *Phronēsis* and conscientization create the reflective process of transformative civility for EMPOWER. The liberating, reflective cycle begins with living and religious practices in the space of oppression. Transformative civility's liberating aspects move it beyond a clergy-based conversation towards realized action, ultimately, within the parents and students. These components move the traditional dialectic tension argument and the varying typologies in black church leadership to a more nuanced and fluid approach that focuses on the mission. Bringing the work's mission to the forefront begins the revitalization of not only the Black Baptist churches within EMPOWER, but also the African-American community. The egg posited on the back of the Sankofa bird, through transformative civility, allows the bird to critique and rethink the egg's usage. This interpretation – offered in dialogue with the present context in Northumberland County, and the forward motion of the bird – becomes the next focus.

[157] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1327.

Chapter 5: Rebuilding Hope through Transformative Civility

Transformative civility offers an opportunity to transform the sense of hopelessness to a space of rebuilding hope. The last chapter reimagined the present context through its historical roots in Northumberland County. *Phronēsis* and conscientization are the complementary components of transformative civility derived from the mutual-critical conversation between the contextual reality and the guiding moral documents of Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches. The mutual-critical conversation provides an avenue for an *informed praxis* but does not provide the details of how this looks and operates in the local community. The germination of a new hope out of transformative civility requires a plan to embody this in the community.

The core goal of transformative civility is a renewed way of viewing the world and a renewed way of engaging the world. The third movement of Smith's BETH method is the hermeneutic outcome. "The task of this movement is to begin to transform existing *praxis* in a way that embraces the critical view of the black church and its *praxis* that was developed in the first two stages," Smith asserts.[158] The third movement merges the contextual analysis of the first movement with the reflective analysis of the second movement to produce an interpretive and re-interpretive analysis. Shifting the lens of interpretation is the aim Smith points towards for the BETH method, where the method leads to action grounded in the hermeneutic analysis. "The goal of [the BETH method is] the transformation of the existing *praxis* of the black church and the creation of an

[158] Smith, 189.

informed praxis for the black church."[159] Smith's suggestion of *informed praxis* implicitly causes him to point to existing *praxis* as being uninformed and un-interrogated. The source of knowledge for the *praxis* changes how the congregation and community engage belief and practice to create *praxis*. The changes in how they see themselves (their belief) will change how they engage the world around them (their practice) to create this *informed praxis*.

The process of transforming practices in Black Baptist churches to advocate for educational reform as a theological justice issue requires an internal education of the congregation and community. The present lack of literacy and empowerment are interconnected. The way persons think shapes the way that persons act in their lived experience. Carter G. Woodson surmises this thought in *The Mis-Education of the Negro* when he posits:

> If you can control a [person's] thinking, you do not have to worry about his [or her] action. When you determine what a [person] shall think, you do not have to concern yourself about what he [or she] will do. If you make a [person] feel that he [or she] is inferior, you do not have to compel him [or her] to accept an inferior status, for he [or she] will seek it himself [or herself].[160]

The hermeneutic that Woodson presents is one of entrapment. The transformation for greater advocacy requires careful attention to the historical challenges present in the denial of equal education and equal empowerment and, as Woodson points towards, the self-propagating actions.

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[159] Smith, 188.

[160] Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Middletown, DE: BN Publishing, 2008), 55.

The denial of equal education – including equal expectations for education – creates lasting challenges. In many spaces, parents did not have the best experience in their K-12 education. These experiences cause many to shy away from learning settings that parallel their educational experiences, and to shy away from guiding their children in those same spaces because of their own adverse experiences. Denial of equal educational opportunities and expectations creates generational challenges. The denial of equal education parallels a denial of empowerment. On the Northern Neck, many people have never left this peninsula of Virginia, aside from occasional shopping excursions. The lack of exposure beyond the region limits their ability to see beyond what is in front of them; therefore, their ability to advocate only goes as far as what they have experienced. The limitations of denied equal educational opportunities limit their access to careers. Many residents point to some employers who have threatened to fire employees who attempt to do any form of advocacy. Therefore, African Americans in Northumberland County often lack equality in both educational opportunities and empowerment.

This reality must inspire educational reform for EMPOWER's churches. The movement from a theory-based approach (black theology) towards a localized, practice-based approach (black church) requires an appreciation for the local context. Theory-based approaches at times have blind spots around the nuances of local, contextual particularities; yet, localized, practice-based approaches at times also have blind spots to deeper research. I name this tension to bring attention to a needed conversation about a pressing reality critical to this project. Anthony Reddie asserts, "The point of departure

for this mode of scholarly inquiry is the experiential, social location of the learner."[161] How the learner engages education and empowerment are critical to the approach needed to implement the transformation. "This practical theological method for undertaking black theology begins with the experiences of the learner and brings them into dialogue with the existential experience and essential meaning of the diasporan black experience," Reddie suggests.[162] For transformation to be real, the black community needs to be engaged in the process, and draw upon the black community's experience, past and present, with the larger theological and cultural perspectives.

Transformative Civility's Outcomes and Stakeholders

This thesis focuses on potential practices of transformative civility in the EMPOWER churches. The purpose is to build upon EMPOWER's prior work in organizing and to create a more sustainable, transformative space. This requires naming the aims (outcomes) and stakeholders.

Outcomes

The intended outcomes for practicing transformative civility in EMPOWER are to address the four concerns identified in the contextual analysis of educational justice in Northumberland County. First, transformative civility in EMPOWER will move religious practices in the black church from ritualistic actions to paradigm-shifting actions, seeking to change the way parishioners discern and follow God's lead as they engage the world.

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[161] Anthony Reddie, "Participative Black Theology as a Pedagogy of Praxis" in *Black Practical Theology* ed. Dale P. Andrews and Robert London Smith, Jr. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015), 62.

[162] Ibid., 71.

Second, transformative civility will move the church and community from being solely reactive to being a more proactive communal body committed to educational justice, thus responding to challenges and problems in more long-term, systemic ways. Third, the practice of transformative civility will move the church and community from its current fragmentation to a greater sense of unity and communal concern. Fourth, transformative civility will move the church and community to more astute awareness. The intended transformative movement brings people together to analyze their conditions and to face the challenges of acting toward change. These four outcomes, taken together, shift the focus of ministry and leadership to the people, the stakeholders.

Stakeholders

Transformative civility's implementation in the local community focuses on the four groups of stakeholders in EMPOWER: children and parents, the community, the congregation, the pastors. I name transformative civility as a model for practical theological leadership, where theological leadership often assumes a hierarchical perspective. However, Baptist churches practice a congregational polity that is a "bottom-up" approach. Therefore, the first stakeholders should be the parents and children enrolled in NCPS in the community. The practicality and urgency of transformative civility will affect their lives directly. These children exist in the data's anonymity in the appendix of this project. These children live in a world of assumptions about their performance based on how they look before they ever take a test or engage in conversation. These parents try to find a way to improve their children's lives often to no avail. These parents, often because of their own experiences, lament the uncertainty of

their children's education. The parents are key stakeholders, regardless of church affiliation or attendance.

The second stakeholder is the community. The community is the County's citizenry as a whole and is the dominant voice for change in the region. The citizens include parents and their children in NCPS, as well as those who do not have direct connections to NCPS. The community plays an essential role in supporting education. The third stakeholders are the congregations of the EMPOWER churches. These congregations have worked together as EMPOWER, but not to their full potential. The congregations need to shift their *praxis* toward transformative civility in order to advocate for the community and all of the parents and children in NCPS.

The fourth stakeholders are the pastors of the EMPOWER churches. This group has been core to the work of EMPOWER since the organization's inception. Transformative civility as a model for practical theological leadership begins with this group. The community's liberation, in this context, ties closely to the church's liberation through the pastors' work. The pastors coming together as EMPOWER created a shift in practices and transparency by the School Board, but was not sustainable. Therefore, transformative civility, being an approach taken by the pastors of the EMPOWER churches, translates to the congregations, where the congregations begin to advocate with the community and also with and for the parents and children enrolled in NCPS. The ordering of the stakeholders represents the prioritization of persons who will receive the most direct effects of transformative civility as a leadership model.

Transformative Civility's Process in Community

Transformative civility in EMPOWER is a leadership practice aimed to address the outcomes with and for the stakeholders through reflection. The process' steps will impact stakeholders in a way that affirms the present "pastor-centric" paradigm in the county, while transforming the space to amplify and focus on the voice of the parents and students. The exposure to transformative civility will happen with the pastors of EMPOWER churches, congregations of EMPOWER churches, the community, and then the parents and students. This top-down approach to transformative civility, at the surface, may appear antithetical to the development of the leadership style. However, this project intends to approach the problem with a top-down approach to empower a bottom-up voice of advocacy, an affirmation of practices within the Baptist congregational polity.

The use of transformative civility towards education justice requires adaptive leadership, as put forth by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky. They identify adaptive leadership with adaptive (rather than technical) problems, which require learning about a problem, envisioning potential responses, and engaging with the stakeholders in effecting change. [163] This project will draw from the five tasks of adaptive leadership: name elephants the norm, nurture shared responsibility for the organization, encourage independent judgment, develop leadership capacity, and institutionalize reflection and continuous learning.[164] This project is influenced by ideas of adaptive

[163] Ronald A. Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 19-23.

[164] Ibid., 165.

leadership but will use different terms. The tools used in the process of implementing transformative civility will include a series of presentations, discussions, trainings, and action steps. Furthermore, before naming the actual four-step process, the project will consider three necessary boundaries sensitive to culture, experience, and accessible language.

Boundaries of the Process

The first boundary is the understanding of culture as the foundation of the entire framework. The leadership approaches will re-emphasize the community's identity and its contribution to the local and national tradition of the Black Baptist church and the transforming of communities locally and nationally. Reddie suggests, "It is important that the educative process for Black people incorporates the important facets of self-identity and Black pride."[165] The possession of pride in self and community creates greater buy-in for the community and by the community. This pride also guides congregational practices for educational reform, celebrating the historic black church and reflecting on how to revamp practices in the present context.

The second boundary is experiences of congregations and community in education and empowerment. The process will consider how a historical lack of access to educational spaces causes African Americans to view some spaces as "othered" spaces. Though legal barriers are no longer present, many African Americans view academic and empowerment spaces as "for white people." The process of transformative civility must

[165] Anthony Reddie, *Nobodies to Somebodies: A Practical Theology for Education and Liberation* (Peterborough, UK: Epworth Press, 2003), 42

remove these paradigmatic barriers and challenge systemic institutions that create false barriers. Reddie suggests a participative black theology that uses the bodies as part of the training to enact the liberation that people seek. "This use is deliberate because the performative mode of this form of dramatic action requires that participants become actively engaged with the 'other' space in which the rule of such dialectical constructs [is] constantly redefined," Reddie asserts.[166] The liberation from a bondage space must enact freedom into a liberated space. This transformation reconsiders the "other-worldly" worship practices to shift into "this-worldly" reality. Fusing these worlds creates the transformation needed in transformative civility. In addition, the tools in this process empower the community to occupy spaces they once could not occupy. It moves them from timidity to boldness. In places where their ancestors served as the help through the back door, the current generation can be served through the front door.

The third boundary of the process is the local context's language. The language needs to be accessible. The intent is not to be condescending, but rather to recognize the origins and historical use of language and to make it an entry point rather than a barrier. The aim is to communicate the intent of the words rather than to use terms that others have used when those terms are obstructive. For example, the implementation of transformative civility will use the term practical wisdom in place of *phronēsis* and will use critical consciousness in place of conscientization. These synonymous terms encompass the meaning of the two practices, but do so in an accessible way that engages

[166] Reddie, "Participative Black Theology as a Pedagogy of Praxis," 64.

the community itself in addressing threatening issues of survival. The terms are thus practical and critical, enabling stakeholders to participate in a process that is important and beneficial to them.

The process' outcomes, stakeholders, and boundaries guide how transformative civility plants itself in Northumberland County. These three elements point to four process steps for implementing transformative civility in the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County: 1) immersing pastors in practices of transformative civility; 2) sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices with the congregation; 3) mobilizing the community; 4) empowering children and parents. The remainder of this chapter will benchmark each process step in detail, and the next chapter will detail the evaluation of each benchmark in ascertaining and understanding success.

First Process Step: Immersing Pastors into Transformative Civility

The first process step, immersing pastors into transformative civility, focuses on the fourth stakeholder: the group of pastors who form EMPOWER. The process of immersion considers the reality that this group has been operational for several years. In addition, this group has had both successes and challenges in addressing educational reform. EMPOWER's shift to transformative civility leadership will likely be led by the pastors, which requires that they experience an immersion into transformative civility. Here I propose four actions in that immersion process.

Presenting Transformative Civility to the Pastors

The first action is a presentation and information session about transformative civility, taking place in a series of two-hour workshops and seminars, which can take

more than one form: one 8-hour conference, two half-day sessions, or four two-hour sessions. The presentations will be in a visual format (Microsoft PowerPoint, Prezi, or other presentation formats) to address the multiple learning styles and levels of educational attainment of the pastors in Northumberland County. The first module draws from the earlier chapters in this project on the black church's history and in educational reform. This module will give special attention to the role of Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches in this effort.

The second module builds on the first module and unearths the tensions between priestly and prophetic roles of the church. The module will give special attention to this tension in Northumberland County, including notable historic leaders and their struggles in addressing educational reform, and leading to the present state of NCPS, as revealed in their educational data. The third module will convey the educational and disciplinary data, giving particular attention to the achievement gap and disparities between white students and black students, and noting the wide gap between black girls and black boys. In addition, the module will unpack disciplinary data and relate the data to mass incarceration rates, both locally and nationally. This module aims to alert the pastors to the deeper crisis within NCPS and Northumberland County. In addition, the module will reflect upon the first two modules in a discussion period to suggest that the ideological tension of the black church does not shift the lives of parishioners of Black Baptist churches; however, a shift in ideology that parallels the plight of the people can create the needed change.

The fourth module builds on the third one to introduce transformative civility.

This module will discuss the development of the practical theological leadership model from the thought of Martin Luther King, Jr., and that of Walter Fluker. It will explicate the two main components of the project: *phronēsis* (presented as practical wisdom) and conscientization (presented as critical consciousness). This module will explain what these terms mean, why they are important theologically and communally, and how to mobilize them in our communities. In addition, the module will present some examples of contemporary national action that models transformative civility. The fourth module hopefully will awaken the pastors to a new possibility of envisioning the history of black church tradition guiding the contemporary need not as disjointed but as synergetic, drawing from the strengths of both to energize both.

Entering "Othered" Spaces

The second section of immersing the pastors into transformative civility is a half-day session on entering "othered" spaces. This component intends to give guidance for the pastors: 1) to understand how to enter spaces where African Americans were not once welcomed with boldness and confidence; and 2) to understand how to empower their parishioners to enter those same spaces with boldness and confidence. The approach will draw from Reddie's prescriptive ideas within a participative practical theology.[167] First, the entrance of pastors into historically "othered" spaces requires a brief conversation about their own experiences in historically "othered" spaces and some conversations about the local and national policies that created many of these spaces. The exercise will

[167] Reddie, "Participative Black Theology as a Pedagogy of Praxis," 64-6.

have them name places and do an embodied activity that allows them to own the space and walk into it and sit down, while unpacking all of their emotions and thoughts in that space. This exercise serves as a dry run for their actual work in occupying once prohibited spaces.

Second, the section will do a train-the-trainer exercise. It would be easy to assume that pastors, who preach weekly, inherently have the tools to empower people. This project does not make that assumption but assumes that tools of empowerment both complement and enhance existing tools within a pastor's grasp. Therefore, this section also will empower pastors to guide their parishioners to enter historically "othered" spaces with a similar exercise. These exercises begin to enact and embody not only the transference of power from the pastors to the parishioners, but also the church's liberation from historic spaces where they experienced prohibitions.

Locating and Interpreting Educational Data for Transformation

The third section of immersing the pastors into transformative civility is a half-day workshop on locating and interpreting public data. The "how should we live" question within practical wisdom must ask, "How are we living?" The movement from second-class citizenship to first-class citizenship requires a knowledge of what is happening. The longitudinal study presented in this project is a starting point for EMPOWER. However, it must continue moving forward. The third section's workshop will do two core things. First, the workshop will begin to show the group how to add data to the longitudinal study to continue tracking English Reading performance for NCPS students – across race and gender lines – for subsequent years. In addition, it will expand

their knowledge of access to public information, provide introductory information on accessing withheld public information, and filing a Freedom of Information Act request.

Second, the workshop will begin to show the group how to analyze the data. A hesitation around numerical analysis is present with many of EMPOWER's pastors due to popular, oversimplified assumptions that left-brain people are proficient in sequencing, math, and sciences and right-brain people are proficient in the imagination, arts, and humanities. Most of EMPOWER's pastors fall within the category of "right-brain people," and the interpretation of numbers can be overwhelming for them. However, the icebreaker into the exercise will be a conversation about counting church funds. The allure of that topic is to ensure that pastors are aware of their church's financial health; therefore, math is present and desired with short-term and long-term consequences. However, the interpretation of data around the community from public record also has short-term and long-term consequences. This realization will guide them in discovering what the data say to the pastors and the community. This introduction will include some elements of quantitative data analysis and some statistics. The essential part of this is the introduction of pastors to the "othered" space of data analysis – a needed invitation. This workshop will allow them to own the data as leaders before opening the door to engaging the community with the data.

Articulating Transformative Civility

The fourth section of immersing the pastors into transformative civility is preparing them to articulate the various elements of transformative civility to the EMPOWER group and beyond. This will be a half-day workshop in which the pastors

will present to the group what and how they will articulate to their congregations about transformative civility. The critical elements needed in their presentation are black church history, the education' crisis for African-American students in NCPS, transformative civility and its components, the challenges of entering "othered" spaces, and the interpretation of public data.

Though the emphasis on content is important, the method of delivery is also important. Transformative civility empowers the people; therefore, this training will guide the pastors to transfer the power to the people by the pastor becoming a facilitator/conductor in the conversation to guide the people rather than lord over the people. The training will consider the role of power and its transference as part of liberating the people. The last part of the workshop is an initial reflection for the pastors individually and collectively to consider how ecclesial practices change to include advocacy using the presentation's elements. Critical consciousness changes practical wisdom and practical wisdom changes critical consciousness. This reflexive relationship creates the cycle of reflection where transformative civility welcomes the pastors of EMPOWER to enter for the liberation of their congregations and community for generations.

Second Process Step: Sharing and Reflecting on the Vision and Reforming Practices to the Congregation

The second process step, sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices to the congregation, focuses on the third stakeholder: the congregations that form EMPOWER. The process of sharing and reflecting on the vision emerges from the

last step in the pastors' training – the articulation of transformative civility. Transformative civility's entry into EMPOWER's churches comes through the pastors who make up EMPOWER. The outcomes from the first process step create the necessary knowledge and support for the pastors to enact the second process step in their respective churches. The second process step has two sections: sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices around advocacy.

Sharing and Reflecting on the Vision

The first section of sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices is the act of sharing the vision. Each pastor will use a preferred method to articulate the vision of transformative civility to his or her congregation, which the pastors have already tested with one another. Their communication could include preaching, teaching, or sharing in informal sessions, church business meetings, or other spaces of gathering. The emphasis is to reflect with members of that particular congregation. Whatever method the pastor chooses for sharing, the shared vision will include black church history, the crisis of education and discipline for African-American students in NCPS, the components of transformative civility, reflection on entering historically "othered" spaces, and training in locating and interpreting public data. The sharing includes time for prayer and reflection to discern what God is saying to the church. The approach will be both accessible to the congregation's members and briefer than the pastors' modules.

Reforming Practices of Advocacy

The second section of sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices is for the individual congregations to reflect on practices of advocacy. First, the

congregation must analyze and reflect on their present actions – both religious and personal practices – and identify how those practices engage in advocacy. Advocacy goes beyond "community service," in that it extends not just the church's hand into the community, but it extends the church's body into the community. The pastor will have introduced some of this already, and the congregation takes the analysis further to assess why they do what they do.

Second, the congregation will consider ways to change or adjust some practices in order to develop an intentional focus on advocacy. The practices may focus on African-American youth in the church and beyond, questions about being a neighbor, or advocacy practices that have been lost. The church's process may be guided by practices that run deep in the history of the black church.[168] They could also include a contextualized study of biblical covenant narratives or other texts.[169] Other church functions and meetings also might include contextual Bible study to providing space in considering "what is going on" in the local context, including individuals, communities, and the larger society.

Furthermore, reforming practices could include the study of leadership principles with the pastor acting as a facilitator/conductor. The pastor might enhance his or her ability as a facilitator/conductor while the people develop their leadership skills and opportunities. All of these reformed practices have the potential to expand the church's

[168] A guide for this reflection could include Yolanda Smith's *Reclaiming the Spirituals: New Possibilities for African American Christian Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

[169] A guide for this reflection could The Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research's "Doing Contextual Bible Study: A Resource Manual" (2014), available at http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/manuals/Ujamaa_CBS_bible_study_Manual_part_1_2.sflb.ashx.

advocacy on behalf of youth and others and of educational reform. The church can begin its reformation by being present with and for the youth in the congregation and advocating their liberation in all aspects of their lives. In such a way, the congregation lives out transformative civility in its actions and brings the whole body into the work. The final two process steps focus on these stakeholders.

Third Process Step: Mobilizing the Community

The third process step, mobilizing the community, focuses on the second stakeholder: the community of Northumberland County. The community is expansive and is inclusive of the pastors and congregations. A major focus is on the African-American community; however, all members of the community are encouraged and invited to participate. The presence of white residents and families of Northumberland County augments the awareness and effort of advocacy. The process of mobilizing the community represents what I term the "civil" action within transformative civility. The action is civil because part of what this process step presents are actions that society expects to happen. If English Reading is the challenge, then the churches should tutor on English Reading. The latter assertion presents nuances captured in the preceding chapters about academic performance and expectations about African-American students. Mobilizing the community through transformative civility will include tutoring, but not in a traditionally assumed manner. The third process step has two sections: awakening the community and tutoring the youth.

Awakening the Community

The first section of mobilizing the community is awakening the community,

which reflects a reality that the community knows something is not right but has not been able to articulate the problem. This reality is the church's outward push is to reach beyond its walls, not just to serve in the community but also to *be* the community. The action is through a public forum and presentation. The invitation to the public forum will go through the EMPOWER churches and various communities organizations who have collaborated with EMPOWER in previous efforts. The intent is to spread the word to as many people as possible and, thus, to inform as wide a community as possible.

The public forum and presentation to the community have a wider audience than the vision sharing with the EMPOWER congregations. The key facilitators will not be pastors, but non-clerical members of EMPOWER churches to decentralize power and speak to the community. The community forum and presentation will be sensitive to the reality that many are not part of religious traditions, and those who are part of religious traditions may not necessarily be Baptist, an acknowledgment of diversity. The forum and presentation will invite everyone to enter "othered" spaces. This will be a first-of-its-kind gathering or series in which black citizens will enter into historically white spaces and white citizens, into historically black spaces: reconciliation. The ability to welcome others into your spaces is the ability to welcome the hand of solidarity.

The opening experience of the forum will segue into other elements of the forum and presentation on educational reform locally and nationally and the current African-American educational disparities in NCPS. Presenters will articulate the present crisis for African-America students in NCPS and the short and long-term effects this could have upon communities and individuals. The presentation will point to English Reading as a

major place of challenge and will explain the importance of literacy in society. The forum and presentation will include how Black Baptist churches have helped address literacy, locally and nationally, by presenting examples of Northumberland County's historic role in this effort. In addition, the forum and presentation will include a discussion on needed actions, which will be the second section of this process step. Finally, the forum and presentation will conclude with a period of questions and answers for the community to engage with their thoughts and questions. The forum will occur at least twice to accommodate schedules. The forum and presentation for the community aim to inform them for purposes of mobilization.

Tutoring the Youth

The second section of mobilizing the community is tutoring NCPS students in English Reading. As aforementioned, tutoring within EMPOWER is not a traditional approach to tutoring. Traditional tutoring in churches has been individualistic. Churches create a tutoring space for whoever comes to assist where needed for just that church. This action has repeated over generations for tutoring in Northumberland County. The distinction between traditional tutoring and the proposed community-mobilized tutoring is its intentionality and focus, as drawn from a quantitative study.

EMPOWER's tutoring will focus on a core subject: English Reading. Additional subjects may find assistance through EMPOWER, but for purposes of focus and simplicity, EMPOWER will focus on English Reading. Virginia tests students on English reading in grades 3 – 8 and again in grade 11. EMPOWER's tutoring will focus on English Reading tutoring for grades 3 – 8, where the focus will be on elementary and

middle school students. This resolves that question of "what" in the tutoring.

The questions of "where" and "who" both require a rethinking. First, "where" the tutoring will take place reflects a change from past programs. Historically, churches approached tutoring as individual churches; however, EMPOWER's tutoring is conducted as a body of churches. Even though the volunteers will have ties to a particular church as a member or as someone's friend or colleague, and even though they will use the church facilities, they will carry the name of EMPOWER. Second, the use of volunteers becomes the answer to the "who" question in EMPOWER's tutoring. Many of the tutors may have previous teaching or parenting experience, but all will be trained to enhance their appreciation of African-American youth and the recognition of their gifts and needs. The training for volunteers will include the information shared at the community forum and presentation, in addition to pedagogical tools for literacy for marginalized communities.

This approach to tutoring also begins to answer the "how" of EMPOWER's tutoring. Tutoring is a communal effort and requires the resources of the entire community. Part of the shift in thinking within EMPOWER will entail a greater partnership with NCPS in this process. NCPS was aware of the previous tutoring, but the enrollment was low at tutoring sites because EMPOWER did not collaborate much with NCPS. The partnership with NCPS must focus on how to get the students to the local churches using the county's bus assets. Buses in Northumberland County pass all of the EMPOWER churches every day, and collaboration is the key. Further, the educational data focuses on African-American students, but the EMPOWER tutoring is open to all

students of NCPS regardless of race or ethnic background. This approach to tutoring mobilizes the community not only towards action, but also towards greater equality.

Mobilizing the community accomplishes the awakening of the community and the tutoring of youth. However, mobilizing the community presents the civil component of transformative civility as it "contributes to a democratic life when they civilize political contestation."[170] Contestation here revolves around inequalities that prevent educational advancement; yet, the contribution will be the community coming together through the work of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County to contribute to the lives of African Americans and the entire community.

Fourth Process Step: Empowering Children and Parents

The fourth process step, empowering children and families, focuses on the first stakeholder: the children enrolled in NCPS and their parents. Empowering children and parents is a process step separate from mobilizing the community for concerns about reprisal from community businesses or organizations, namely the place of the parents' employment. The fourth process step intends to create a space for a small group of parents to gain the tools necessary for their empowerment through the work of Black Baptist churches in EMPOWER. However, I suggest the process of empowering children and parents represents a "subversive" (transformative) action within transformative civility. The action is subversive because part of what this process step presents are actions that society does not expect to happen.

[170] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1327.

The process of empowering children and parents comes through a gathering named Ambassador Sessions. Ambassador Sessions intend to empower children and parents to have full control of their advocacy. The history of the black church has had pastors stand up for the community and speak on the community's behalf. The role of the pastor has been one to stand in the proverbial gap between where persons are and where they feel or discern they should be. Historically, pastors were the voice for the community. Unfortunately, the pastors did not understand their "this-worldly" authority before EMPOWER formed. However, that authority remains valid and alive, as the NCPS School Board is very attentive to the presence of black church pastors. Nevertheless, the NCPS School Board is more attentive to parents who have concerns. The unfortunate part is that many African-American parents do not feel they have equal authority to speak up for their children in comparison to white parents. The Ambassador Sessions begin to equalize the power in moving the expectations of advocacy from second-class citizenship to first-class citizenship. This fourth process step has three sections: before, during, and after the Ambassador Sessions.

Before the Ambassador Sessions

The first section is what happens before the Ambassador Sessions. Planning for the Ambassador Sessions requires the gathering of several parents. The desired group is 4 – 6 parents of African-American students in NCPS to meet, ideally, at the home of one of these parents. The parents should know one another to have a level of pre-established trust with each other. The entry point to access these parents comes from the EMPOWER churches and the community within Northumberland County. The presence of young

adults in Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County is a challenge. However, the aim is to utilize one parent who invites friends who are also parents of NCPS students. These other parents may or may not feel comfortable being present for the community forum and presentation. Therefore, EMPOWER's awareness of the strong communications network among African-American parents creates this space for sharing.

This communications network navigates the phenomena in black communities of communal sharing and individual or family protections of privacy. The network of parents draws from the historic African-American network of survival dating back to the period following slavery. On the one hand, the vastness and depth of this network allow the communication of what is happening in the community to spread rapidly. On the other hand, the contemporary efforts to protect privacy lead people to avoid sharing their personal and familial challenges to the public for fear of shaming, particularly in the church. The small Ambassador Sessions provide both opportunities – communal sharing about education with some degree of privacy in personal sharing. The goal is advocacy, but not broad sharing of personal narratives. The hope is that Ambassador Sessions will inspire at least one parent, who then becomes an advocate, drawing friends into additional Ambassador Sessions.

Parents are the focus of Ambassador Sessions, so the sessions take place in private spaces to minimize apprehension or dangers of reprisal. Ambassador Sessions offer a similar forum and presentation with children and parents as done for the community in public space. This private space at the home of a parent allows open conversations and authentic fellowship. EMPOWER will provide food for the sessions

with funding from congregational contributions. The atmosphere for open conversation and authenticity is of prime import for Ambassador Sessions.

During the Ambassador Sessions

The second section is what happens during the Ambassador Sessions. The session will include content similar to that shared in the community's forum, which includes the black church's role in education reform, locally and nationally, and the current African-American disparities in education and discipline. However, the difference in these conversations lies in facilitation and personalization. Parents are the primary facilitators, while the pastors and members of EMPOWER churches give guidance and support. This facilitation shows the parents that other African-American parents have power that they too possess. Therefore, the facilitation, in itself, empowers the parents. In addition, the personalization allows parents a space to speak about the challenges they have experienced. This space gives them the freedom to express their thoughts in a safe space.

To enhance the group's ability to move into unfamiliar and empowered space, the leader will invite them into an activity of entering historically "othered" spaces, similar to the one with EMPOWER churches. This approach will allow children and parents to name the spaces they could not enter in the past, and then practice speaking openly and honestly in these unfamiliar spaces. This "othered spaces" activity will emphasize the need for a communal voice. The parents will articulate their thoughts individually but will do the activity communally. The premise behind the approach is that when a group of parents speaks up, it becomes harder to target parents individually. The parents will empower one another.

Furthermore, the voice of one parent becomes the voice of other parents; therefore, parents move from an individualistic concern about their child(ren) towards a communal concern about the children in their community. The Ambassador Sessions offer small and symbolic communities that spread into the larger community as people increasingly realize that educational challenges affect all students, especially those African American students who face unjust challenges. This realization can mobilize the children and parents to have a voice that works in parallel with that of the pastors and congregations of EMPOWER churches, advancing parents to the forefront of advocacy.

After the Ambassador Sessions

The third section is what happens after the Ambassador Sessions. First, the EMPOWER churches need to maintain a constant dialogue regarding the parents' needs, as the parents need to maintain a constant dialogue with the EMPOWER churches regarding how the church can be better support. The ongoing dialogue and support encourage the parents to move from isolation to support and from a space of silence to a space of speaking. Second, African-American parents steadily will become self-advocates for children in a way that parallels the freedom of white parents and addresses the unique challenges faced by black children. This form of advocacy includes the EMPOWER churches supporting these parents at NCPS School Board meetings and offering guidance for dialogues with their children's teachers. Equipping parents with the tools to engage in advocacy is not enough; people need a support network – not just in prayer but also in presence – to support their efforts. The ongoing dialogue and support empower the children and parents.

The Ambassador Sessions with children and parents, guided by the pastors and congregations of EMPOWER churches, accomplishes empowering children and parents. In addition, empowering children and parents presents the subversive component of transformative civility as it "subvert[s] complacent consensus."[171] The parents moving from uncertain complacency to certain advocacy is the intent of the fourth process step. The assumption of many in the community is that the Black Baptist churches will calm the community and allow the status quo to maintain. EMPOWER subverts this approach and brings children and parents to the table of educational justice as equals and not as subordinates. This equalization accomplishes the greatest task of transformative civility: liberating the masses.

The Process and Rebuilding Hope

The process described here creates a new space that rebuilds hope in Northumberland County. The four process steps provide multiple approaches to change in the community, a mark of rebuilding hope. The hope is the liberation of the people through educational justice. The process includes: immersing pastors in transformative civility, reflecting on the vision and reshaping practices in congregations, mobilizing the community, and empowering children and parents. These process steps create a new foundation for liberative change in Northumberland County through a refocused *informed praxis* for educational reform and empowerment.

The outcomes of transformative civility address the black community's contextual

[171] Fluker, *Ethical Leadership*, location 1327.

concerns for educational justice through *phronēsis* and conscientization. The awakening of the people through transformative civility develops bottom-up leadership, where the parents become the community's voice and stand at the forefront of advocacy. This exercise of power will begin to rebuild hope in the community and provides space for change. Transformative civility's intent, as a practical theological leadership model, is to ensure it is both successful and sustainable. The next chapter will explore how the project will measure the success of the process steps. EMPOWER will move from an episodic group to a movement of continual reflection and change in Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. This shift requires an understanding of how to measure the success of the practical theological leadership model and determine how to create the cycle of reflection on beliefs and practices.

Chapter 6: Benchmarking Hope Rebuilt

This project has examined the lives of Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County, Virginia and their historical and contemporary approaches to educational reform. It names the problem as the community's lack of internal advocacy, which in the Black Baptist churches reflects a loss of hope within the context of faith. By unpacking black church traditions, the project points to a shift toward a less communal and more individualistic approach to being the church. This shift has deeper nuances and perspectives affecting the Black Baptist churches. The project poses the question of whether the black church can rise to its prominence as a social change agent or is it moving toward death?

Smith's BETH method becomes the entry point for understanding the context and potential future of the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County. The multi-layered investigation in the BETH method revealed historical challenges that linger into the present day. It also revealed the educational and disciplinary disparities between black and white students in NCPS, which has led to the development and challenges of EMPOWER. These revelations segue into the mutual-critical conversation of BETH. The conversation is a theological reflection that places the contextual reality in a reciprocating conversation with the context's normative texts. In the case of Northumberland County, the mutual-critical conversation challenges the black church to move away from a dialectic between priestly vs. prophetic typologies toward transformative civility as a practical theological leadership model. The project expands transformative civility to suggest *phronēsis* and conscientization as necessary complementary components to

awaken the congregations and community around educational reform.

The project moves to analyze the final step of the BETH method: the hermeneutic. The hermeneutic in the BETH method draws from the existential (multi-layered investigation) and the theological (mutual-critical conversation) as a way to shift the lens and change practices: *informed praxis*. The hermeneutic points to outcomes, process, and people as necessary spaces of change, which leads to the four process steps that this chapter measures as benchmarks from the hermeneutic step of the BETH method. The benchmarks, or points for action and evaluation, are: 1) immersing pastors into transformative civility; 2) sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices to the congregation; 3) mobilizing the community; 4) empowering children and parents. The purpose of this chapter is to present timelines and measures to evaluate the success of each of the four benchmarks. Most of these extend beyond the completion of this document; therefore, the timelines are future projections with measures that are beyond the reportable scope of this chapter and immediate project.

Timelines and Measures of the First Benchmark

The first benchmark is immersing pastors into transformative civility. The timeline for this is approximately two months. Each of the modules requires several hours, and the pastors need time both to reflect upon and to digest the information. The use of various tools like journaling to reflect is welcome in the group. Indeed, the previous chapter pointed to the potential of completing the modules in one sitting; however, I do not recommend that approach. I suggest two months for recurring sessions. EMPOWER met regularly, so the ability to gather the group should be quite possible.

At the end of the two months, the pastors articulate transformative civility to one another. The measure of success for the first benchmark is the pastors' ability to articulate transformative civility. Their articulation includes the four modules in presenting transformative civility, entering "othered" spaces, and locating and interpreting public data. The session on articulating transformative civility guides the pastor in the format and content necessary to share the vision with their congregations. As Baptist churches are autonomous, the intent is to provide constructive criticism to the pastor presenting, while allowing the pastor to present in the style that he or she desires. The feedback will assess the presentation' strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the feedback will help each of the pastors understand the wide scope of thought across Northumberland County's Black Baptist churches. The giving of affirmations or praise and suggestions for improvements are measures of success among all of the EMPOWER pastors regarding each of the presentations.

The consensus vote is necessary to ensure all of the churches are communicating the same ideas with adaptations to fit their particular congregation. These pastors have had open and honest conversations in the past, so there is no concern about authenticity. EMPOWER took down barriers between churches; therefore, the ability to provide constructive criticism is fertile in this space. The adjustments to presentations allow space for pastors to present their updated presentation again for further feedback. This communal learning and critiquing approach strengthen the bonds within EMPOWER, as the pastors are aware of the crisis present in the community. The intent of this measure of success is for both the comprehension and the articulation of transformative civility,

which is essential to the second benchmark.

Timelines and Measures of the Second Benchmark

The second benchmark is sharing and reflecting on the vision and reforming practices in the congregation. The timeline for this is approximately three months and the steps for the second benchmark do not begin until the completion of the first benchmark. This condition is necessary, as the pastors need time to digest the practical theological leadership model in a way they can articulate to their congregation and communicate the same message as the other pastors in EMPOWER. This common message leads to a shared vision. The three-month period is necessary to weave educational reform advocacy into the church's life. These congregations are familiar with EMPOWER, as many of EMPOWER churches' parishioners served in some capacity in EMPOWER's initial work. Therefore, the congregations will not see this as foreign and likely will have a willingness to participate.

The measures of success for the second benchmark involve interpreting data from a survey that the congregation will fill out. Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County are not averse to surveys, as they participate freely in data gathering activities when they know it will advance the community and not be solely one person's cause. The survey will be quantitative on educational advocacy. The survey will capture demographic information while maintaining anonymity. The demographic information pertinent to this survey includes gender, age (selected from a range of ages), whether or not they are a parent of a student and their church affiliation. This survey data will help in analyzing the intersectional demographics.

The survey will be 10 – 15 questions focusing on five areas with several questions in each area. The areas will be knowledge of educational resources, religious practices and liberation; willingness to advocate for their respective child in public space; willingness to advocate for other children; and fears/concerns about advocacy in Northumberland County. The survey will ask the participants to select responses on a scale of one to five: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), or strongly agree (5). These measures will provide a quantitative analysis of EMPOWER.

However, this measure of success is not stagnant in time. The survey will be administered three times – before, immediately after, and two months after the pastor shares the vision and reforming practices. The timing of these surveys provides information about particular moments, and also provides comparative data across time. The first survey will present baseline data. The second survey will measure the congregation's responses to the pastor's sharing of the vision and the congregation's work with it. The third survey will determine how the passing of two months, and the whole process, affected people's perspectives. The ability to compare all of the responses will enable EMPOWER and the churches to evaluate their movements toward liberation.

Timelines and Measures of the Third Benchmark

The third benchmark is mobilizing the community, an ongoing benchmark. The steps for the third benchmark do not begin until the completion of the second survey in the second benchmark. This condition is necessary, as the congregations need time to digest the practical theological leadership model in a way they can articulate it to the community. The community presentation and gathering will happen within two months

of the second survey in the second benchmark. However, the actions of mobilizing the community are ongoing because of the tutoring that is part of the third benchmark.

The measures of the third benchmark are three-fold. First, EMPOWER will administer a quantitative survey on educational advocacy that will be different from the survey given to the congregations. This survey will capture demographic information while maintaining anonymity. The demographic information pertinent to this survey will parallel that of the second benchmark with the exclusion of church affiliation. The survey of 8-12 questions will focus on four main areas: knowledge of educational resources, willingness to advocate for their children in public space, willingness to advocate for other children, and fears and concerns about advocacy in Northumberland County. The survey will ask the participants to select responses on a scale of one to five, paralleling the survey of the second benchmark. These measures will provide a quantitative analysis of the community.

Again, the measure of success will be conducted at three different points within the benchmark. The three different periods are before, immediately after, and two months after the community forum. The timing of these surveys not only assesses the community's attitude towards the four areas at a particular time, but also compares the community's attitude towards the four areas in comparative space. The first survey will present baseline data. The second survey, in comparison to the first survey, will determine how the community forum and presentation changed the community's perspective on the four areas. The third survey, in comparison to the second survey, will determine how being removed by two months affected their perspective on the four areas.

The third survey, in comparison to the first survey, will determine if the two months caused the community to resort back to where they began. The analysis of survey results will enhance EMPOWER's understanding of the success rate, and help the organization to decide on areas in which to invest future attention in the community.

Second, EMPOWER will continue to track English Reading test scores and continue updating the longitudinal study, which will measure the success of tutoring in English Reading at the EMPOWER churches. Not all African-American students at NCPS will participate in tutoring, but the measure acknowledges the progress of improving English Reading for the students who receive it. In addition, EMPOWER will continue to follow and follow-up with the NCPS School Board for policy or resource changes that apply to this metric. The work of educational reform does not happen in a vacuum, but rather it happens in a collaborative effort. EMPOWER recognizes that they are part of a larger conversation in NCPS and the collective effort to highlight and address the educational crisis.

Third, EMPOWER will continue to track disciplinary data as reported by OCR. At the same time, they will not wait for the behavioral data, but attempt to address issues proactively as they arise. EMPOWER will work closely with NCPS in addressing in-school suspensions. In addition, the timeline for this is immediately after the second survey from the community forum and presentation, which allows space for potential mentoring activities. If EMPOWER waited for OCR data, they would be one year behind the reality in NCPS. Measuring the third benchmark in three ways enables EMPOWER to assess the influence of the community forum and presentation and to reflect on how this

intersects with liberative change in Northumberland County.

Timelines and Measures of the Fourth Benchmark

The fourth benchmark is empowering children and parents. This benchmark will be ongoing. The steps for the fourth benchmark do not begin until the completion of the second survey in the second benchmark, as the timing of this benchmark parallels the work in the third benchmark. This condition is necessary, as the congregations need time to digest the practical theological leadership model in a way they can articulate to students of NCPS and their parents. This will be ongoing because the Ambassador Sessions will cycle, as new groups emerge, and a continuing reflective process is needed.

The measure of success for this benchmark is a qualitative study of the pastors and parents one year after the first Ambassador Session begins. This would be an interview study, where the aim is to understand how the pastors and parents view educational reform and their sense of hope within Northumberland County. The study would follow the proper guidelines of human-subject research, and would require anonymity with the data and care for both the interviewer and interviewee. The aim is to capture the feedback of pastors and parents following the implementation of transformative civility. In addition, the study will analyze how the pastors experienced the parents and how the parents experienced the pastors. This analysis is important, as the intent of transformative civility is to empower the parents through the work of the church. The question of how empowered do the parents feel is central in the analysis. Furthermore, the interviews will also seek to determine the readiness of parents to stand at the forefront of advocacy for their children and the children of others.

The coding and interpretation of the interviews will be in conversation with the surveys in the second and third benchmarks. Together, these quantitative and qualitative studies will provide a mixed-method study to evaluate the impact of transformative civility in the lives of NCPS students and parents, the community, congregations, and pastors in Northumberland County. These combined studies will also be compared to shifts in English Reading scores and disciplinary data. The questions are whether an impact has happened through transformative civility and if hope has been reborn. This larger analysis will find completion at least two years after presenting transformative civility to the pastors. This awakening of the black church is intended to create an ongoing dialogue and a reflective cycle.

Sustaining the Reflective Cycle in EMPOWER

The work of implementing transformative civility moves the community away from episodic acts of justice into a reflective cycle of action. However, if one does not weave the reflective cycle into the fabric of the Black Baptist churches and the community, then justice will remerge as episodic. The tools for a sustainable movement are in place. However, sustainability requires some reconsideration of the roles that different individuals play in this work. As parents embrace empowerment more, they will speak up for their children and other children. These parents become the face of advocacy on the front lines and unify with other parents. One of the challenges is what happens to the church in this process? As black communities advance and grow, the black church falls by the wayside.

This change is two-fold. First, the ongoing dialogue between the pastors and the

parents creates a better relationship between the pastors and the parents. Ultimately, this relationship hopefully will create better relationships among parents, community, and congregations. These relationships address concerns about the movement away from the religious leaders toward the empowerment of the parents. Historically, the black church served as the epicenter of cultural dynamics in the African-American community when there were no other institutions or bodies of advocacy. As those other institutions and bodies rose to power, the black church moved from being the epicenter to near marginalization. Transformative civility allows for empowered parents and the black church to coexist equally and not fight for power. In addition, it creates an environment where the church does not marginalize parents, and parents do not marginalize the church.

Second, the tools of reflection refocus the black church on theological reflection. Equality and justice are more than social issues; they are theological issues. This reality changes how the black church will engage it. Equality and justice are not simple terms to amplify outward religious practice, but they represent the lament of the people – the community, parents, and NCPS students – where the church can be the voice of support to enhance the advocacy of parents and community leaders.

This reflective cycle also requires more diversified voices at the table. I point to the composition of EMPOWER. Presently, EMPOWER's leadership is pastors. However, EMPOWER has discussed inviting more people to the decision table. It is important to have laity at the table with pastors to ensure that this process of transformative civility is sustainable and grounded. The parents' and community's buy-in requires their voice also

to be a vote when decisions occur. Sustaining transformative civility in the training and retraining of pastors, congregations, community, and NCPS students and parents will require a level of human capital to support the work. Some people are hesitant to join until action takes place. However, as unity increases and academic performance improves, people will join the movement more and more. The sustainability of EMPOWER and transformative civility in Northumberland County requires a constant pulse of where inequality and injustice exist, not just in episodic moments but in systemic practices.

Challenges in Moving Forward

The challenges in moving forward must consider ways to resolve the issues presented in this project. First, the differences between black and white citizens will not find resolution in this project. However, a major hope is that work on racial reconciliation continues to progress as conversations and actions in the community grow. Second, the comparison of the historic black church and the contemporary black church can help create a future black church that is a constructive fusing of the historic with the contemporary. Third, black theology and the black church arise largely from the same realities and sources. In truth, they are deeply interconnected, and they need one another. The distinction between church and academy needs more fluidity and reciprocating conversations. The hope is an active bridging that enhances how both reflect on the interaction of God with humanity. Finally, the contrasts between communal and individual foci suggest the need for greater understanding of the connections that already exist, as well as the possibilities for communities to be more engaged with individual

concerns (such as educational justice), and individuals with communal needs. This approach can enrich both. The challenges presented here affect the sustainability of transformative civility and the project's ongoing work.

Conclusions

This project offers four conclusive reflections that point to a glimmer of hope reborn for the black church and the African-American community in Northumberland County through transformative civility. First, children need advocates, and transformative civility creates a wider span of advocates. Transformative civility can unlock the paralysis around advocacy for African-American children in the County. The advocates will encompass a wide span of people as parents embrace their own greater empowerment, and as the community moves away from a "my child" ideology and towards an "our children" ideology. Transformative civility unlocks the potential in a community. African-American students need advocates. The data shared in this project hopefully will improve over time, especially as more advocates stand up with children and as the children themselves move from surviving in frustrated second-class citizenship to living in empowered first-class citizenship.

Second, parents have unrealized power that can be unlocked by transformative civility. African-American parents need to represent the students' voice to the NCPS School Board. They have watched white parents advocate for their children. African-American parents have often thought that only select African-American students would succeed, and that the parents of those students were the only ones with a voice. Transformative civility unlocks the parents' power to have a voice in the community

through communal action. This empowerment moves the parents from a space of helplessness and hopelessness to being both helpful and hopeful for the future of their children. In addition, the exercise of agency can begin to heal the wounds that many parents carry from their own educational experience. Many parents felt the pain of an unjust system and strayed away from educational reform. However, the shift from transformative civility in Northumberland County allows these same parents to embrace, with their child, what they as parents could not experience. It is not a space of living vicariously through one's child, but rather giving one's child the true space of freedom.

Third, the black church is inherently a space of transformative civility. The definition that Fluker offers for transformative civility points to the black church and its practices. The DuBoisian definition of the black church also points to practices. These practices extend back to slavery's fields in America and encompass an intent of resistance. The resistance is the will to recognize and honor how God created people and not to live in a world of inequality and injustice. The black church has been the space of transformative civility in its practices for generations and can be reborn in carrying that mantle.

Fourth, p*hronēsis* and conscientization expand Fluker's definition of transformative civility and brings the vision King had for the black church full circle. The critiques of the black church's demise come out of a period reflecting upon King's death. The work King pushed the church and community towards unraveled following his death. However, the vision King had for the church, as leading to a space of equality and justice, finds realization through transformative civility. As Fluker draws from King's

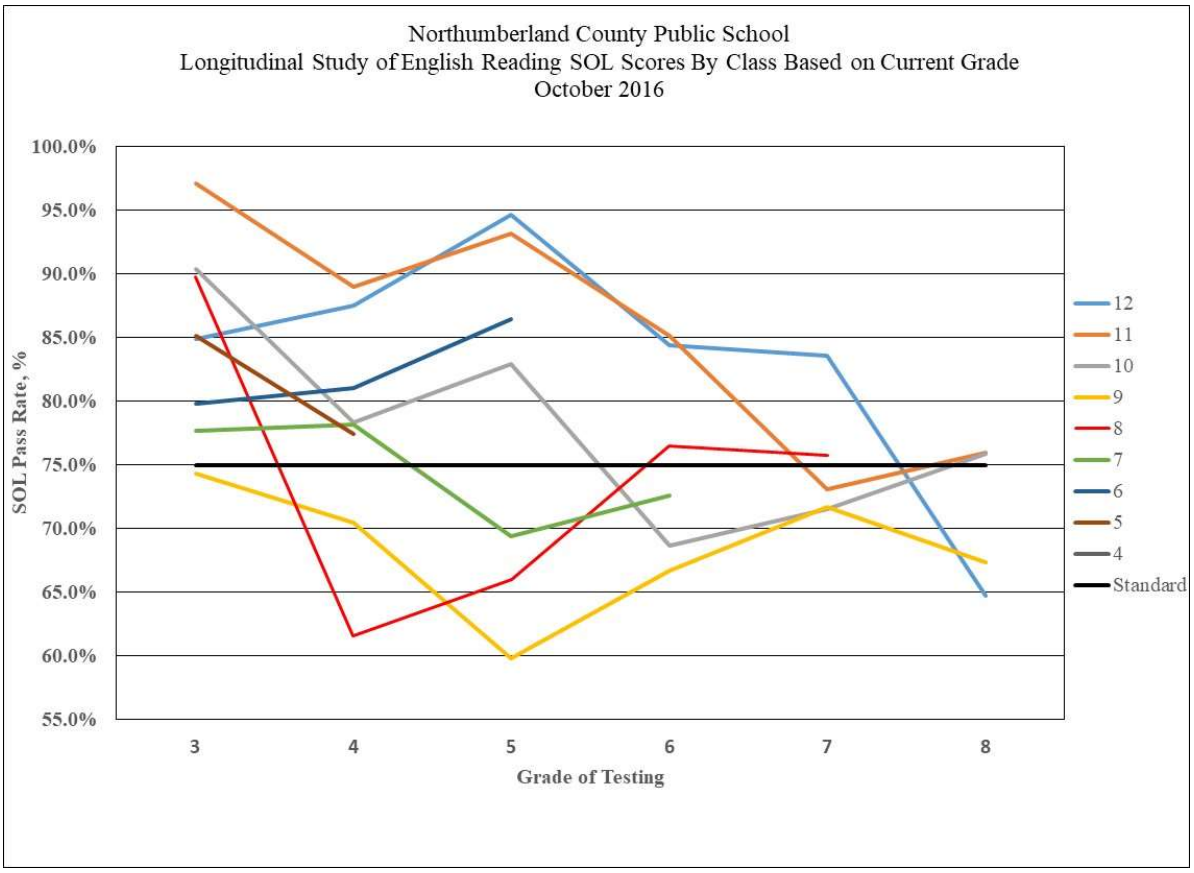
transformed nonconformist to create transformative civility, I draw from Fluker's transformative civility to expand the definition. The elements of *phronēsis* and conscientization awaken the church to its reality and call the church to fight for justice in the community. The fight for justice stretches beyond the African-American community. Transformative civility moves the Black Baptist churches in Northumberland County to advocate for African-American children in a quest to fight for all children, bringing King's vision of the church and community full circle. The quest for justice in Northumberland County is just beginning, but the reality that people live in can improve and have a closer alignment with God making humanity equally.

Appendix I: English Reading Standards of Learning Test Scores for Students in the 2016-2017 Academic Year

Northumberland County SOL Scores for English Reading (October 2016)										
	Current Grade ->	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
	Class of ->	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Grade of Testing	3	84.9%	97.1%	90.4%	74.3%	89.7%	77.7%	79.8%	85.1%	90.0%
	4	87.5%	89.0%	78.3%	70.5%	61.5%	78.1%	81.1%	77.4%	N/A
	5	94.6%	93.1%	82.9%	59.8%	66.0%	69.4%	86.5%	N/A	N/A
	6	84.4%	85.2%	68.7%	66.7%	76.5%	72.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A
	7	83.6%	73.1%	71.6%	71.7%	75.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	8	64.8%	76.0%	75.9%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	9	U/A	U/A	U/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	10	44.4%	50.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	11	81.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

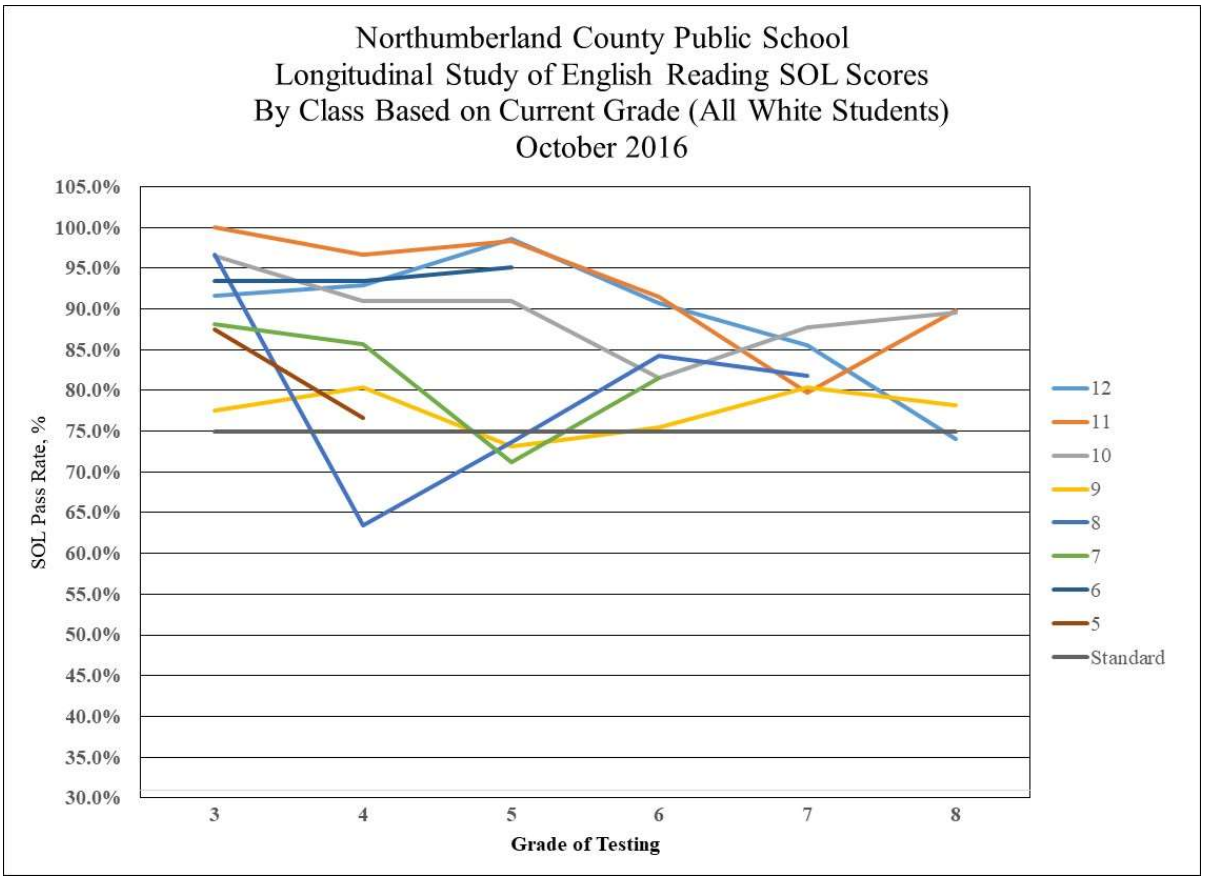
Note: Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178 :::::.

Appendix II: English Reading Test Scores for All Northumberland County Public School Students (2016-2017)



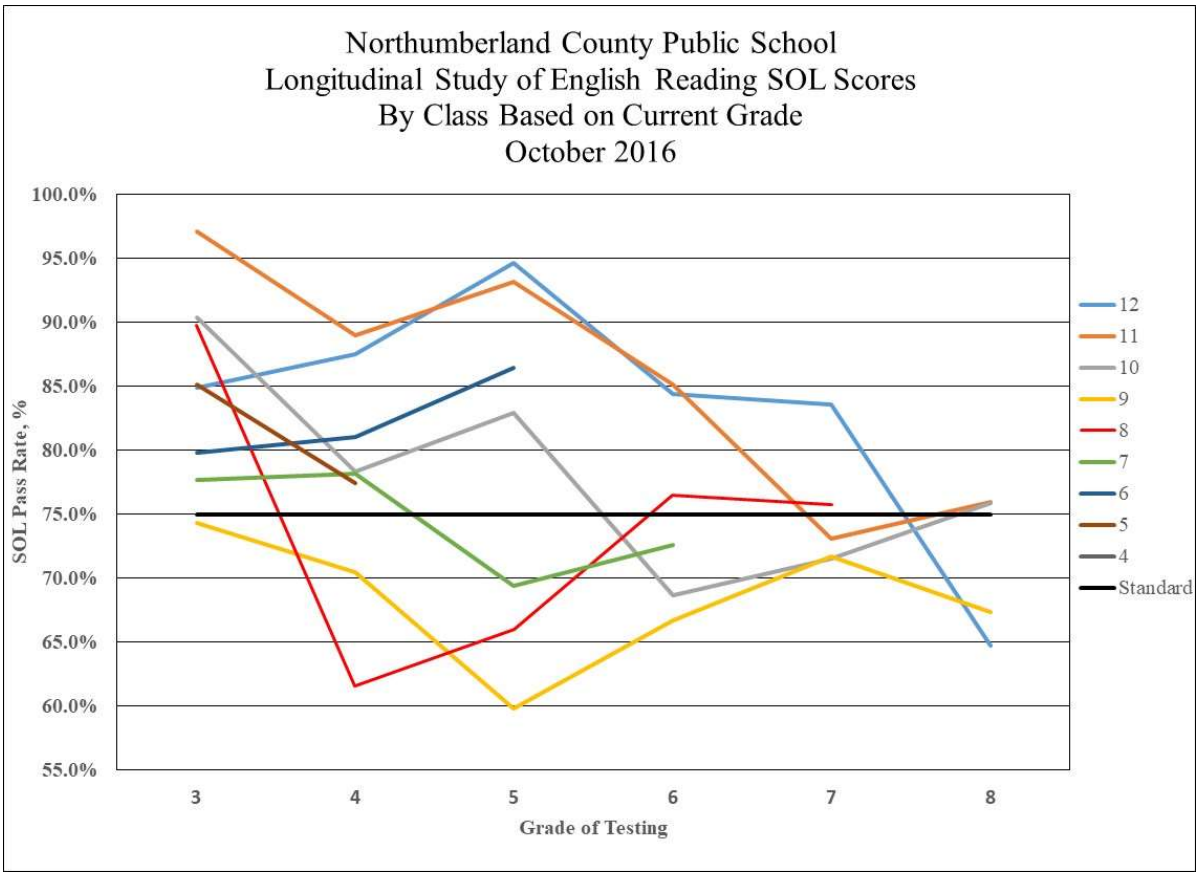
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178:::::

Appendix III: English Reading Test Scores for All White Students in Northumberland County Public Schools (2016-2017)



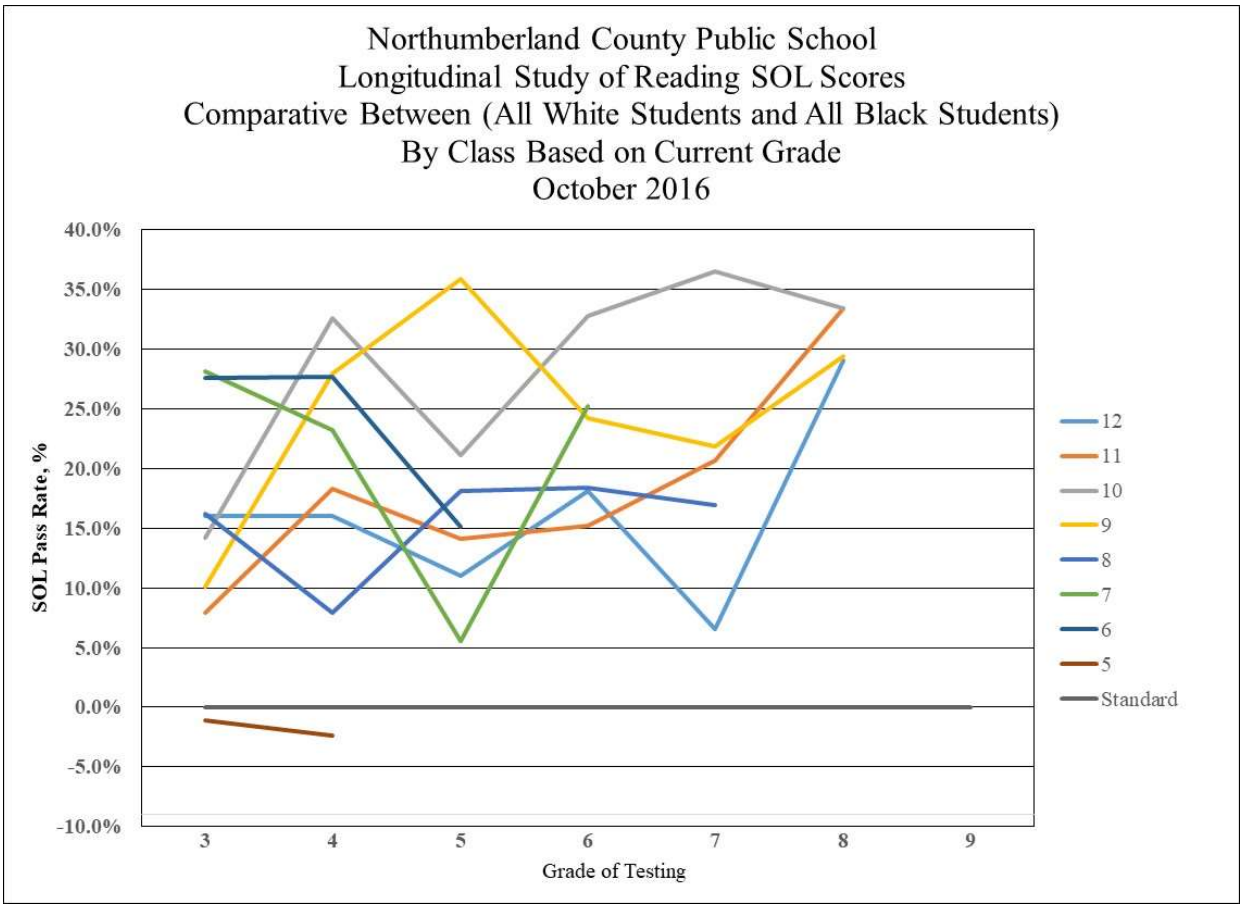
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178:::::.

Appendix IV: English Reading Test Scores for All Black Students in Northumberland County Public Schools (2016-2017)



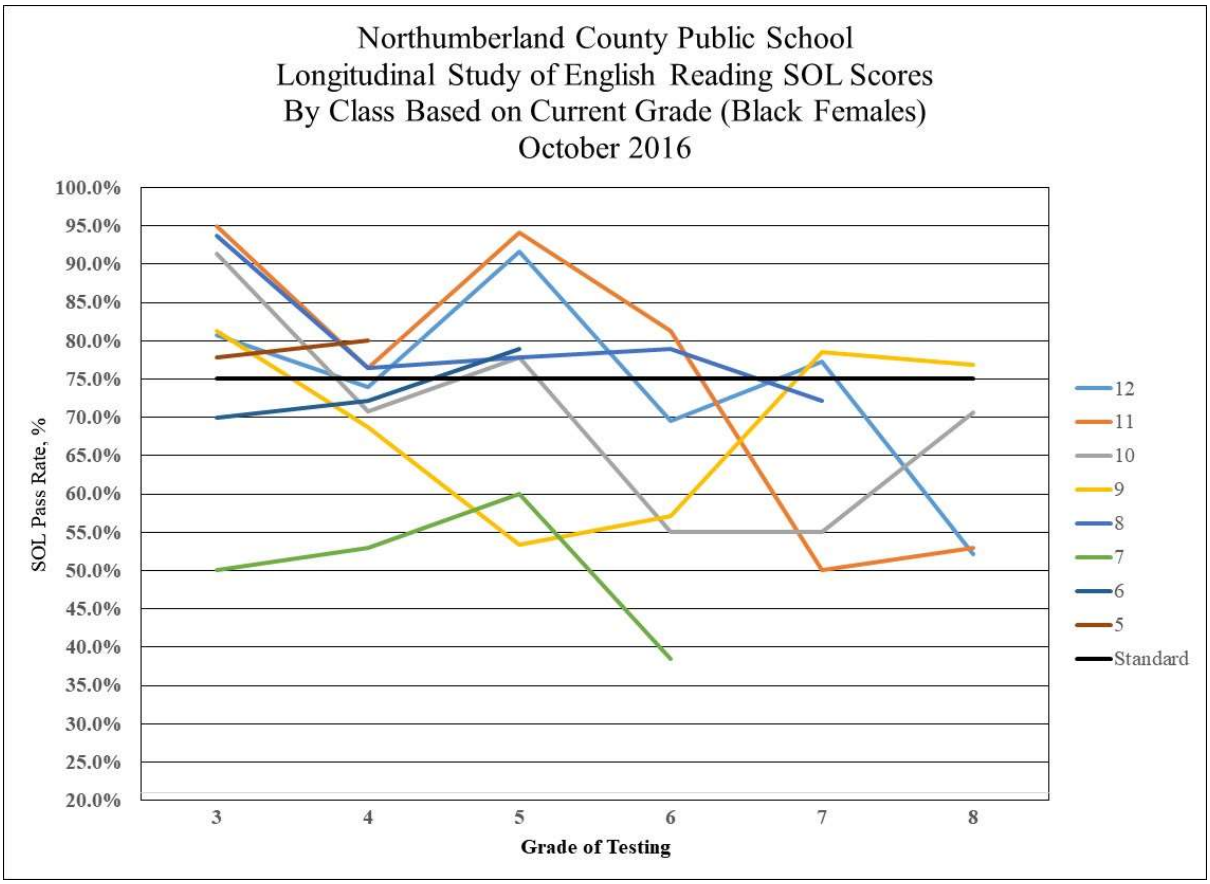
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178:::::.

Appendix V: English Reading Test Scores for Variance Between All White Students and All Black Students in Northumberland County Public Schools (2016-2017)



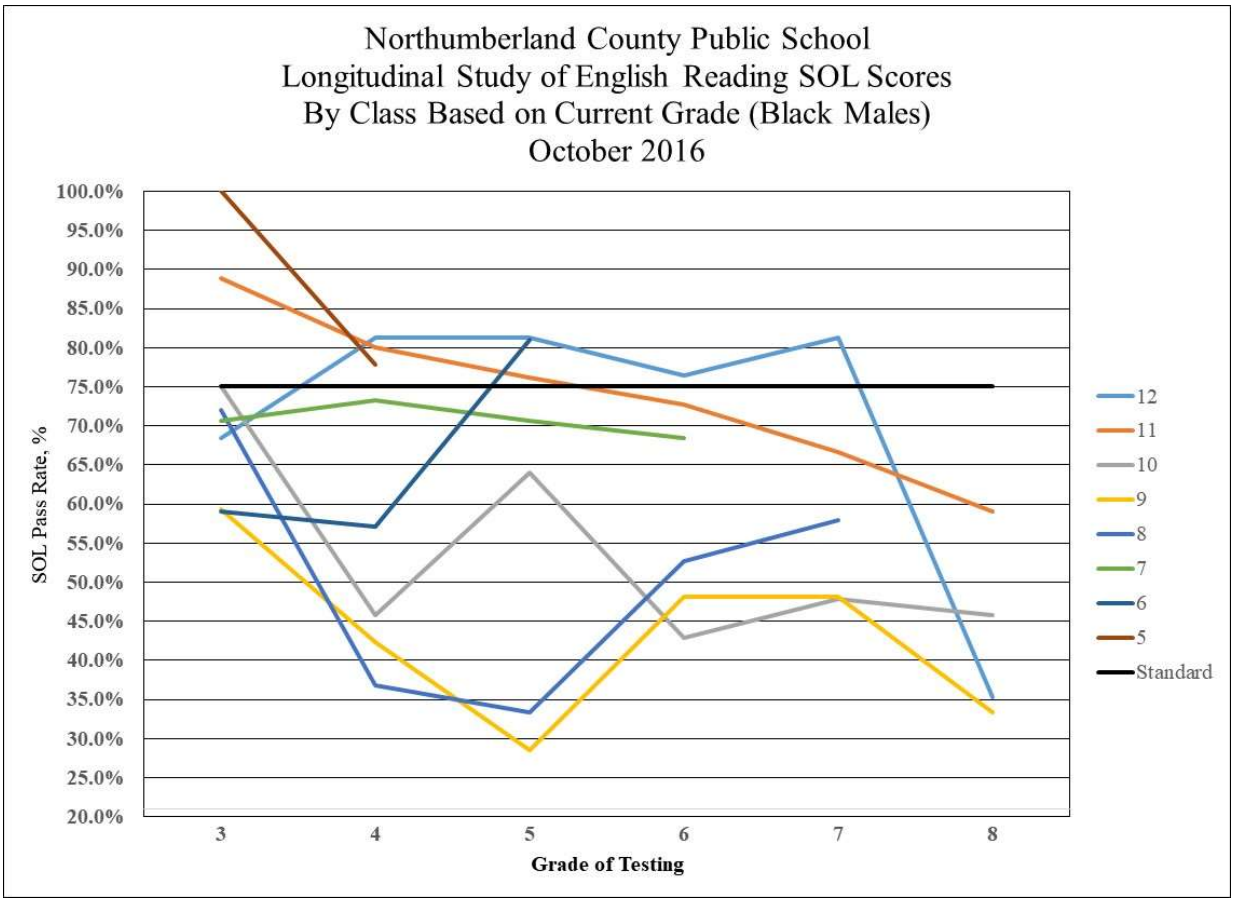
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178::::::.

Appendix VI: English Reading Test Scores for All Black Female Students in Northumberland County Public Schools (2016-2017)



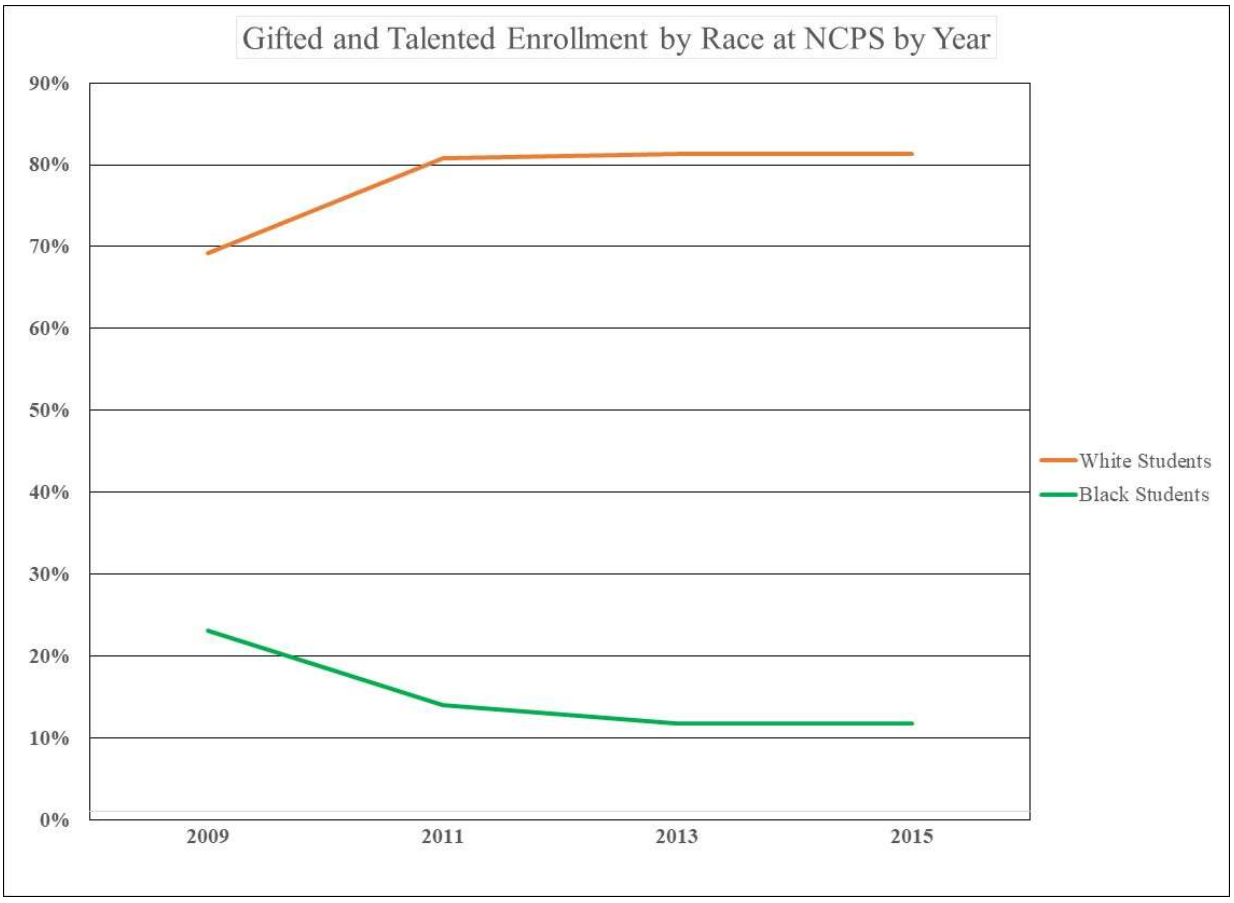
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178:::::.

Appendix VII: English Reading Test Scores for All Black Male Students in Northumberland County Public Schools (2016-2017)



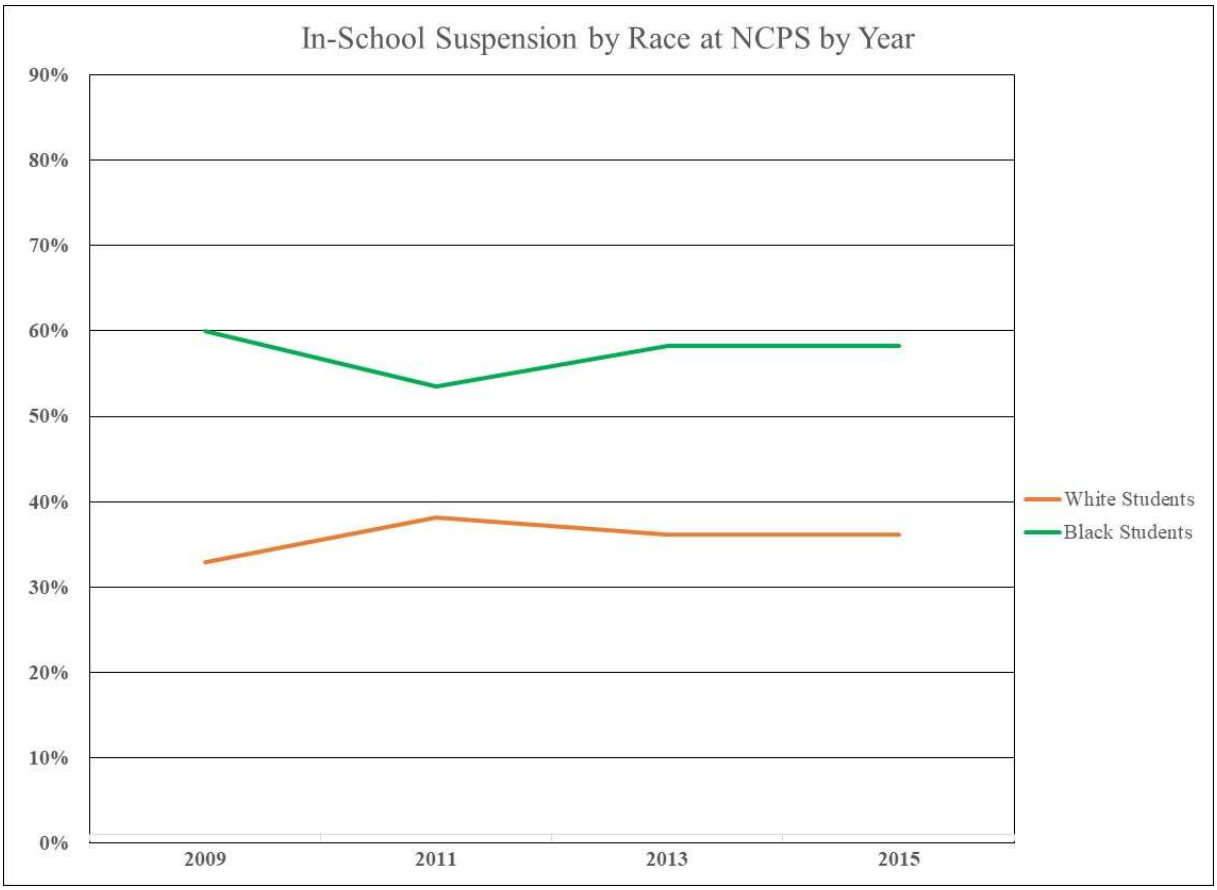
Adapted from "SOL Test Results," Virginia Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/apex/f?p=152:1:83218118178:::::.

Appendix VIII: Enrollment by Race for the Gifted & Talented Programs in Northumberland County Public Schools by Year



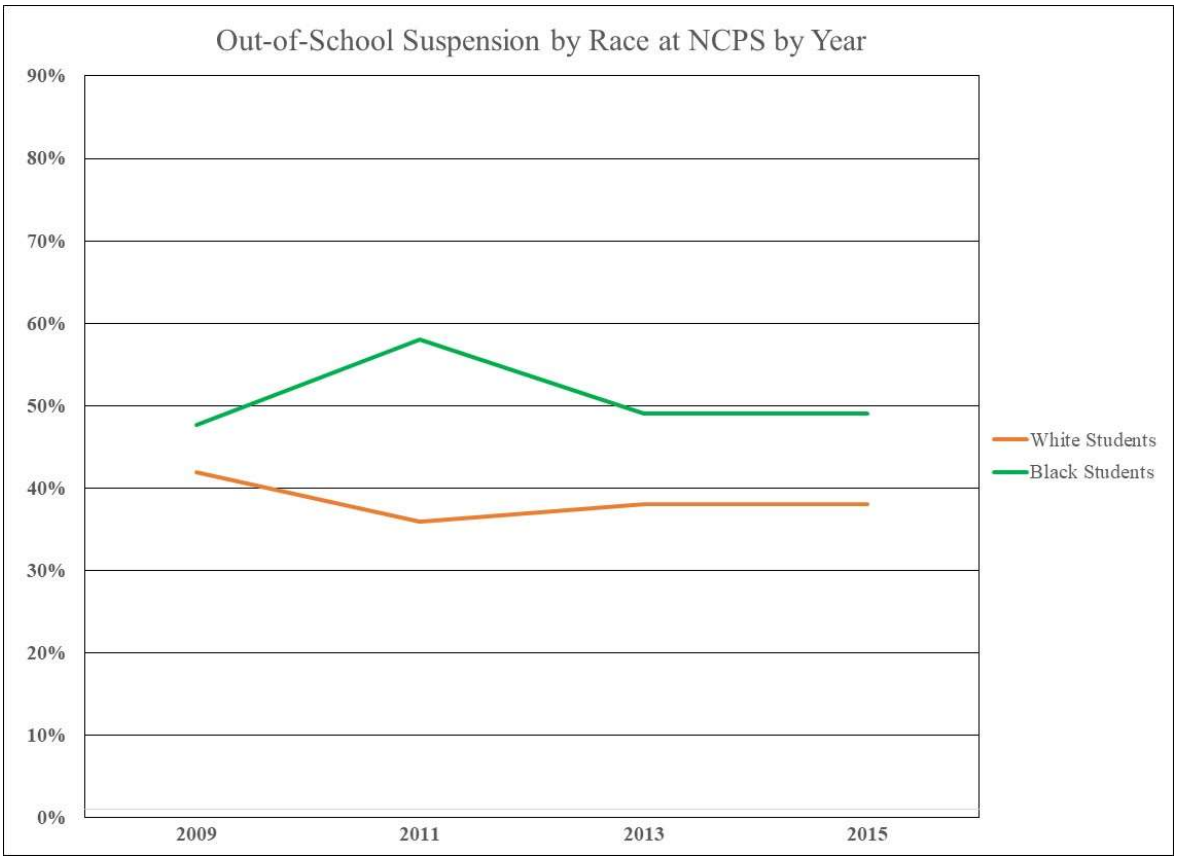
Adapted from "Gifted and Talented Enrollment from Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015," Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch?ds=1.

Appendix IX: In-School Suspension by Race in Northumberland County Public Schools by Year



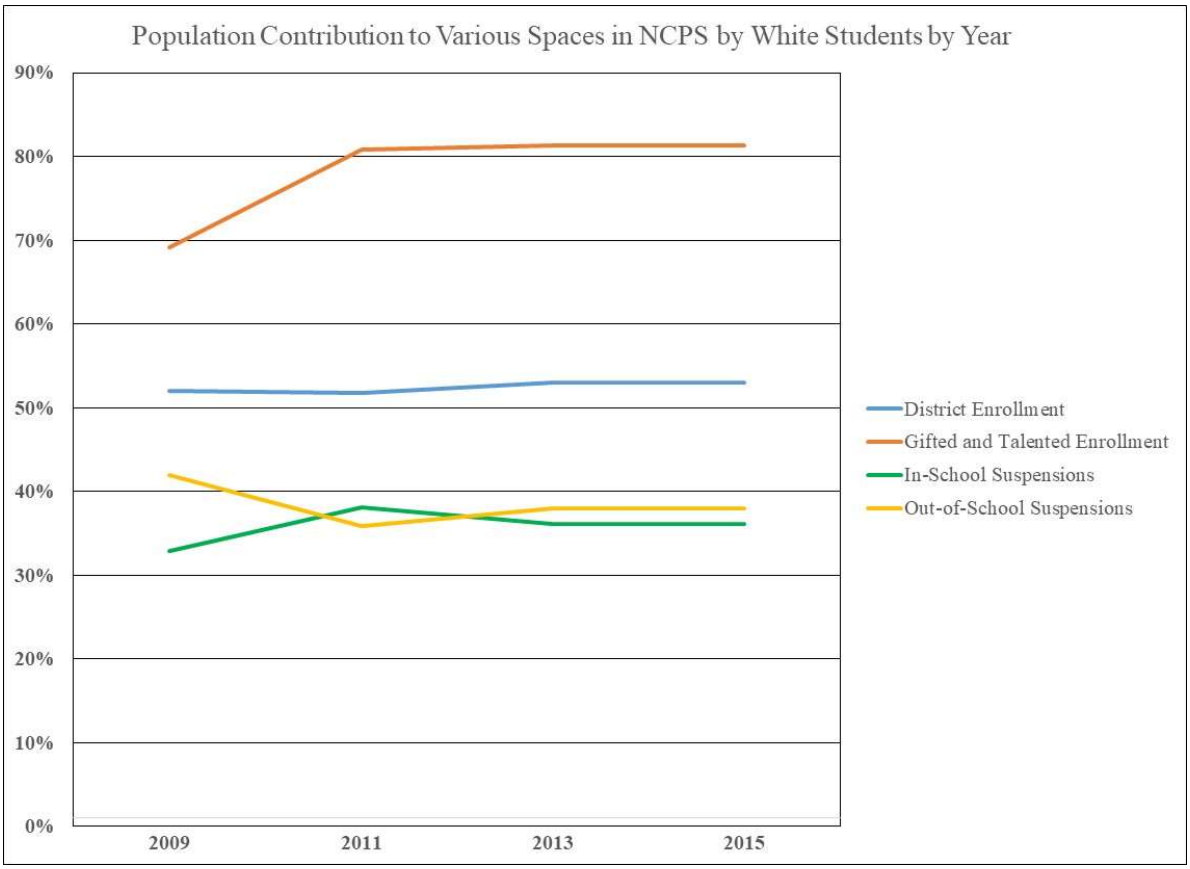
Adapted from "In-School Suspensions from Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015," Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch?ds=1.

Appendix X: Out-of-School Suspension by Race in Northumberland County Public Schools by Year



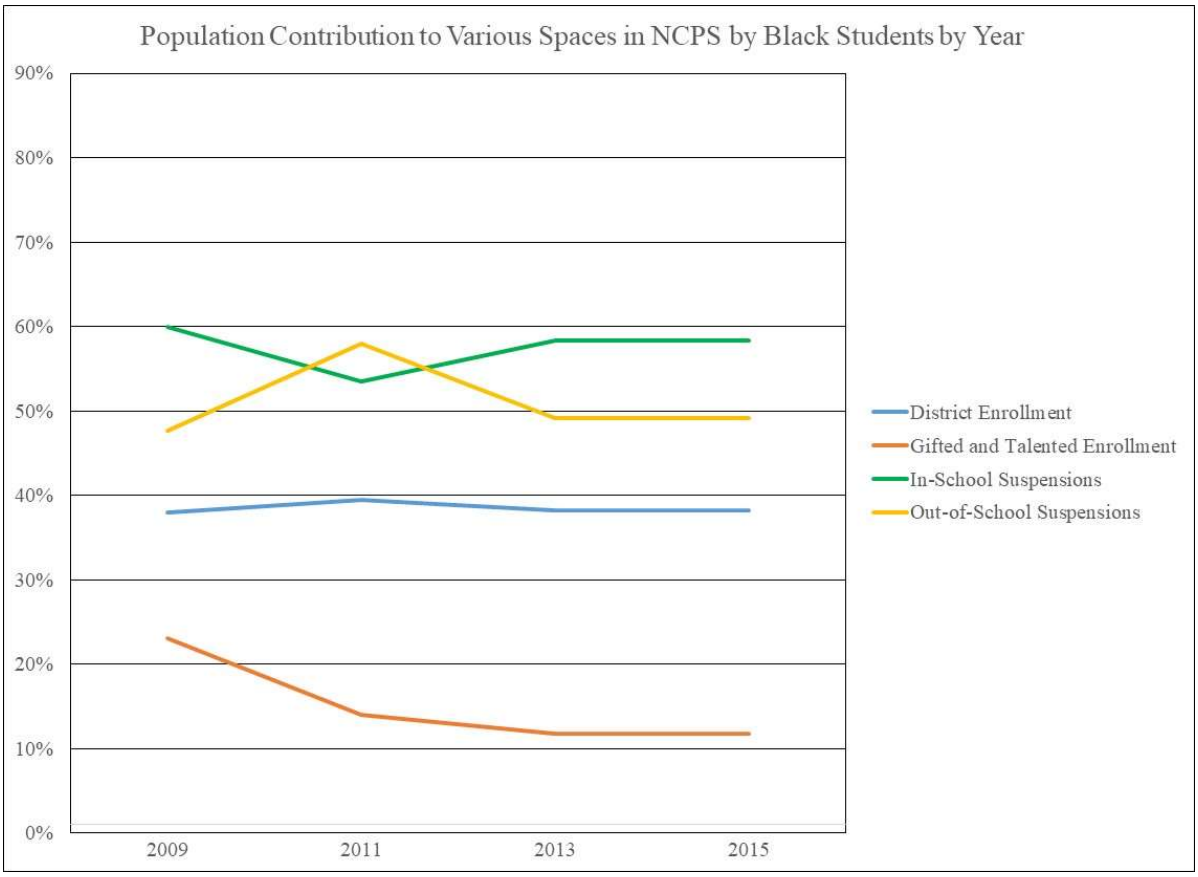
Adapted from "Out-of-School Suspensions from Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015," Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch?ds=1.

Appendix XI: Population Contribution to Various Space in Northumberland County Public School by White Students by Year



Adapted from "District Enrollment, Gifted and Talented Enrollment, In-School Suspensions, and Out-of-School Suspensions from Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015," Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch?ds=1.

Appendix XII: Population Contribution to Various Space in Northumberland County Public School by Black Students by Year



Adapted from "District Enrollment, Gifted and Talented Enrollment, In-School Suspensions, and Out-of-School Suspensions from Northumberland County Public Schools District Summary of Selected Facts for 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015," Office for Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education, 2018, accessed December 28, 2018, https://ocrdata.ed.gov/DistrictSchoolSearch?ds=1.

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